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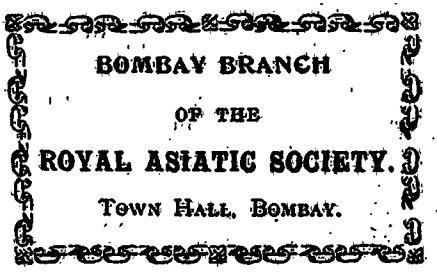

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ESSAYS

[SECOND SERIES]

ON SOME OF

THE DIFFICULTIES

IN THE WRITINGS OF THE

APOSTLE PAUL,

AND IN OTHER PARTS OF

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

111007

BY

RICHARD WHATELY, D.D.

ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

ἐν οἷς ἐστι δυσνόητά τινα, ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλοῦσι.
2 PETER iii. 16.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT was my object in a former series of Essays to set forth the importance of an earnest and studious *attention* to the christian revelation. There is a notion, more commonly entertained than acknowledged, that the Gospel is a mere authoritative republication of Natural Religion;—that consequently it is chiefly, if not solely, to those of unphilosophical and vulgar minds, incapable of perceiving the internal evidence of this Natural Religion, and the intrinsic beauty of virtue, that such a revelation is important or needful,—and that, to the more intelligent and refined, it matters little whether or not they inquire minutely into the particulars of that revelation,—whether they believe, or disbelieve, or doubt, its reality—or whether they even propose to themselves the question. With a view to counteract this (as it may be called) heresy of indifference,—in my view, the most deadly of all errors, not excepting Atheism,—I pointed out and dwelt on several *peculiarities* of the christian Religion; points wherein the Gospel-scheme differs from all other systems of religion,—whether pretended *revelations*, or avowedly the offspring of human reason,—that have ever existed. And the contemplation of

these peculiarities must evince, I thought, the importance of carefully ascertaining whether the Gospel-revelation is real or fictitious; and if real, of endeavouring to understand as fully as possible its character, and to embrace it heartily as a rule of life. While at the same time the consideration that Christianity differs thus widely from every other religious system, in many important points, and in many wherein they all agree, and, in those very points in which a true revelation might be *expected* to differ from any scheme of Man's devising,—this consideration, I say, presents a phenomenon well deserving the attention of such as are candidly inquiring for the evidences of this religion. For till unbelievers can propose some solution of this phenomenon, other than the *truth* of the revelation, (which, in so many centuries they have never accomplished, nor, as far as I know, even attempted,) it must afford, at the very least, a strong presumption, that the religion is really from God.

These disquisitions seemed to lead naturally to some remarks as to the mode in which the Scriptures should be studied. For if it be supposed (and the notion is very prevalent,) that great part of them consist of a series of perplexing difficulties, serving only to exercise the ingenuity of theologians in endless controversies, and barren of all edifying application, or even leading to dangerous practical consequences, the result will be, that the student's attention will be confined to a small portion of the Sacred Records, and to that portion which will, by itself, furnish the most

imperfect view of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity: a result which cannot fail to foster the error above alluded to, of undervaluing the Gospel-revelation, and regarding it as a mere authoritative declaration of certain moral truths.

The first step then in an examination of the Gospel-scheme, after we have once been convinced, generally, that it is *worth* examining, is to guard against the bias to which we are liable, either from the apprehension of perplexing difficulties in it, or from a suspicion of the inutility, or dangerous tendency, of its most remarkable doctrines. Such a bias cannot fail to deprave the judgment as to the real character of the Gospel-revelation. In the preliminary Essay, accordingly, I have endeavoured not only to inculcate the importance of such an earnest pursuit of Truth, and steady adherence to it, as may overcome the seductions of indolence, and of seeming expediency, but I have pointed out also the several modes of self-deceit by which men persuade themselves that they are, when in fact they are not, sincere lovers of Truth; and the way in which that tendency may be best combated; namely, by assigning in every case, not, as is often done, the second, but the *first* place, to the inquiry, what is TRUE?

Much that has occurred since the first appearance of this Essay has raised my estimate of the importance of the subject. When I first published it, and also, not very long after, the one on *Pious Frauds* (3rd Series), I did so, of course, under the conviction

that the dangers therein adverted to, of being seduced from the straight path of ingenuous veracity, were neither unreal, nor trifling. And I was confirmed in this conviction,—groundless as it may have seemed to some—by the judgment of several whose opinion appeared to me entitled to much deference; including—strange as it may seem—persons who, a few years after, came forward to defend and act upon principles diametrically opposite to those which I had been enforcing. But though convinced of the necessity of watchfulness against deviations from the straight line of simple uncompromising sincerity, I was not prepared for such an outbreak as subsequently took place of open defiance of truth. In common with many others,—though to a less degree than some of them—I was astonished at the plain avowal of the system of Reserve[1]—Double-doctrine—Disciplina Arcani—Œconomy—or Phenakism—as it has variously been denominated. And I was even still more astonished that so many should be found who could not, or would not, perceive,—palpable as it was—this avowal, and the corresponding conduct, even when pointed out to them.

But most of all was I astonished and shocked to observe that many who did perceive, and censure, the disingenuousness of the system, yet continued to speak with admiration of its advocates as eminently holy men, and as deserving, on the whole, the gra-

[1] See Dr. West's Sermon on *Reserve*.

titude of the Church for their alleged services in respect of certain Rites and Forms; making the "tithes of mint and rue and cummin" a kind of set off against the neglect of "the weightier matters of the law;" professing to agree with them in the main, and thus lending their aid towards the prevalence of a party whose delinquencies in the most fundamental points they did see and confess.

Some years later still, yet further practical avowals of a system of insincerity opened the eyes of many who had before disbelieved its existence, and excited *surprise* as well as disgust in these; though not, in those who had, several years before, called attention to those principles and practices, not, as something to be dreaded hereafter, but as actually existing, and plainly discernible. And I would suggest that there is something of a presumption in favour of the judgment, on this subject, of those who plainly saw, and pointed out, the disingenuous procedure which others wholly overlooked, then, (even though the former invited attention to it,) but which they now acknowledge to be such as they had been (vainly) forewarned of.

I would also further suggest, to those who have been in the habit of eulogizing and professing to assent to—on the whole, and in the main—the system which they now perceive to be thus tainted morally as well as doctrinally—to consider whether they are not bound to come forward with an open protest

against principles and practices which they admit to be fundamentally wrong. To say that the advocates of that system have taught *much that is true*, and good and useful, is no more than might be said of Mahomet; who protested against Polytheism and Image-worship. If any persons in his time (and it is likely there were some such) who wholly disbelieved, and *privately* censured, his pretensions to Inspiration, and his claim to be the promised Paraclete, had, in public, *contented* themselves with praising his inculcation of the divine Unity, and his exhortations to almsgiving, and dwelt on the gratitude due to him for the good service he had done, we should regard them as wilful abettors of the cause of known falsehood. For, the more there is of good and true in any system, the more need there is to warn men against that admixture of evil and false which is thus enabled to gain the greater currency.

Some there are however who do not, even yet, perceive the real character of the system, or the danger of being drawn into it. If even but one of these shall have been roused to increased vigilance by anything I have said in the first of these Essays, or elsewhere, I shall be thankful for such a result. At any rate, I shall have cleared my own conscience.

In the Second Essay, I have offered some remarks on the neglect or dread, prevalent among many persons, of the Apostle Paul's writings; on the causes which have produced this;—and the consequences to which it leads.

In the succeeding four Essays, I have treated of certain doctrines which have given rise to much controversy, and particular views of which have mainly contributed to the dread many have felt of this Apostle's writings. I have accordingly endeavoured to show that the doctrines in question, as taught by Paul, afford no just ground of alarm; and that the extravagant representation of them that some have given, has arisen from a hasty and partial view of the works of this Apostle. In these Essays I have especially endeavoured to set forth the importance of referring to the Old Testament as an interpreter, by analogy, of the New.

I have been informed that some of the hearers of the discourse of which the Third Essay contains the substance, understood the argument in § 2 to be merely a repetition of Archbishop Sumner's in his valuable work on "Apostolical Preaching." Such a misapprehension is, I trust, less likely to take place in the closet; but to guard against the possibility of it, it may be worth while here to remark, that though I coincide with Archbishop S. in his conclusion, the arguments by which we, respectively, arrive at it, are different. The distinction which he dwells on, is that between *national*, and *individual* election; that on which I have insisted, is, the distinction between election to certain *privileges*, and to *final reward*; he, in short, considers principally the *parties* chosen; whether Bodies of men, or particular persons: I, the things *to* which they are chosen; whether to a

blessing, *absolutely*, or to the *offer* of one, conditionally.

Some other principles of interpretation, frequently overlooked, and very essential to the right understanding both of Paul's Epistles, and of the other Sacred Writings, I have pointed out in the Seventh and Eighth Essays, as applicable to the doctrinal, and to the moral precepts of the New Testament Scriptures. The use to be made of the apparent *contradictions* we so frequently meet with, has been particularly dwelt on; with a view to show that they ought not to be regarded, as is commonly done, in the light merely of *difficulties* to be surmounted, but as a peculiar and most wisely-contrived mode of *instruction*.

In the Ninth Essay, I have applied the principles before laid down to the ascertainment of the sense of Scripture respecting the doctrine of spiritual influence:—a doctrine not only of the highest practical importance, and one concerning which the greatest difficulties have been started;—but also one in respect of which, more perhaps than any other, Paul's authority has been confidently appealed to, by some, in support of the most extravagant conclusions, and for that reason, depreciated or disregarded by others.

In the Tenth Essay, I have endeavoured to trace out the real character, as set forth in Scripture, of

christian Self-denial; contrasting it with the Ascetic Mortifications which find a place in false or corrupted systems of religion; and which were introduced into Christianity through an inattentive or a prejudiced perusal of several passages in the Works of the Apostle Paul, and of other of the Sacred Writers. And I have pointed out that the errors alluded to, lamentable as have been their effects, serve to furnish a strong evidence of the divine origin of the genuine Gospel.

In treating of these subjects, it has been my aim, not, to ascertain, on each point, *everything* that may be reasonably believed and plausibly maintained; but, what we are bound to believe and to maintain *as a part of the Gospel-revelation;* and this distinction I have more than once adverted to, as being one of the highest importance, and not seldom overlooked.

In the prosecution of these inquiries, I have freely availed myself of whatever remarks or illustrations I chanced to meet with in various authors, that appeared suitable to my purpose. As therefore there is, I trust, no novelty in the doctrines inculcated, so there is no pretension to complete originality in the arguments adduced. If I shall have succeeded in selecting such as are at once sound, and generally intelligible, and in arranging and expressing them in a perspicuous and interesting manner, the object proposed will have been accomplished.

I have only to add, that the design of the present Work being, not so much to refute or to advocate the tenets of any particular person or party, by means of an appeal to Scripture, as to facilitate the interpretation of Scripture to those who are seeking in simplicity for divine truths, I trust it will be received by the candid, even among such as may in some points differ from me, with no feeling of party-prejudice or hostile suspicion.

I am well aware however that, as universal approbation is not to be looked for, so, the greater part of that which an Author does obtain, will usually not be from those whom he has really most influenced. For, the effect produced by any book or speech of an argumentative character, on any subjects whereon diversities of opinion prevail, may be compared—supposing the arguments to be of any force—to the effects of a fire-engine on a conflagration. That portion of the water which falls on solid stone walls, or on anything else that is incombustible, is poured out where it is not needed. That again which falls on blazing beams and rafters, is cast off in volumes of hissing steam, and will seldom avail to quench the fire. But that which is poured on woodwork that is just beginning to kindle, may stop the burning; and that which wets the rafters not yet ignited, but in danger, may save them from catching fire. Even so, those who already completely concur with the writer, as to some point, will perhaps bestow high commendation on an able defense of the opinions they already held;

and those again who have fully made up their minds on the opposite side, are usually more likely to be displeased than to be convinced. But both of these parties are left nearly in the same mind as before. Those, however, who are in a hesitating and doubtful state, may very likely be decided by forcible reasons. Those, again, who have not hitherto considered the subject, may be induced to adopt opinions which they find supported by the strongest arguments.

And it will often happen that the same individual will belong to every one of the above-mentioned classes, in reference to different parts of the same work. He will perhaps warmly approve of some parts which coincide with the views he had already fully adopted; he will as strongly disapprove what is at variance with his own fixed opinions; and he will perhaps be influenced by something that is said in reference to points on which he had not fully made up his mind.

But the readiest and warmest approbation an author meets with, will usually be from those whom he has not convinced, because they were (in reference to that portion of his Work which calls forth their applause) convinced already. And the effect the most important, and the most difficult to be produced, he will usually, when he does produce it, hear the least of. Those whom he may have induced to reconsider, and gradually to alter their opinions, are

not likely, for a time at least, to be very forward in proclaiming the change.

The Tenth and the Eleventh Essays, which have been added to the later editions, have also been printed separately for the use of the purchasers of the former editions.

ESSAY I.

ON THE LOVE OF TRUTH.

Christian religion distinguished from Paganism, and characterized by its claim to truth as established by evidence, and its demand of Faith in that Truth.

§ 1. THAT any one who undertakes to propagate or to maintain any religion should represent it as a *true* one, and should demand reception for it on that ground, seems to us of the present day so natural and unavoidable, that many probably would be ready to take for granted that this must have been the case always;—that the question of "true or false?" must always have stood, as it certainly ought to stand, on the very threshold of every inquiry respecting such a subject; and that all who adhered to an old, or embraced a new religious system, or rejected either, however credulous, or prejudiced, or otherwise *bad judges* of evidence they might be, yet must have supposed themselves at least to be determined by *evidence* of some kind or other, to belief or disbelief in the truth of what was proposed to them. And accordingly, there are, probably, many who do not estimate the full force and importance of our Lord's reply to Pilate, "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the Truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

A moderate acquaintance, however, with the habits and modes of thought which prevailed among the ancient heathen, may convince us that the real state of things was far from being such as the above reasoning would lead us to suppose. Their minds were, on this subject especially, estranged from the love of truth. Many circumstances indeed concurred to render them habitually indifferent to it. Among the learned,

philosophical pursuits seem to have been originally introduced as an elegant recreation[1]: and there can be no doubt that many at least attached themselves to this or that Sect, not from any sincere conviction of the truth of its doctrines, but to furnish themselves with suitable topics for declamations. The Schools of the philosophers were a kind of intellectual Palæstra; and there was a close analogy between their disputations, and the prevailing gymnastic contests: each was a *game;* the object of which was victory, without any ulterior end, but only for the display of strength and skill, bodily or intellectual. And the zealous cultivation of rhetoric, to which the majority of eminent men made all other studies subordinate, and whose most appropriate object is not the discovery of truth, but the invention of arguments[2], could not but foster the prevailing disregard of truth.

It seems too, to have been the settled conviction of most of those who had the sincerest desire of attaining truth themselves, that to the mass of mankind truth was in many points inexpedient, and unfit to be communicated; — that, however desirable it might be for the leading personages in the world to be instructed in the true nature of things, there were many popular delusions which were essential to the well-being of society[3]. And in the foremost rank of these they placed their popular *religions.* Their own notions respecting the Deity were totally unconnected with morality; and they despaired of imbuing the vulgar with the philosophical principles on which *they* made virtue to rest. They made it a point of duty, therefore, to testify by their example the utmost respect for the established religion; and to impress on the multitude that reverence for the gods, and dread of divine judgment on crimes, which they themselves in their own more private writings derided.

They did not however seek to effect this object, (and this is

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[1] Σχολή. [2] *Elements of Logic,* B. IV. ch. 3, § 2.

[3] See a Discourse on the *Doctrine of Reserve,* by Rev. J. West.

a circumstance deserving of especial attention,) by undertaking *to prove the truth* of the popular religions. He who labours to prove, implies the possibility of doubt, and challenges inquiry; and they well knew that there was no evidence for the existing superstitions which could satisfy doubts, or stand the test of inquiry[1]. The only thing to be done, therefore, was to forbid all doubts as impious,—to suppress all inquiry; and, consequently, to forego even the practice of asserting the truth of the established systems, which had, as Paul expresses it, "changed the truth of God into a lie[2]." They were maintained as politically expedient, by the civil magistrates; whose appropriate instrument is not argument, but coercion: and who for the most part utterly disbelieved them, and were sensible that they could not be established by evidence, yet were convinced that they ought to be established by law. And as it is the nature of legal enactments to produce, not belief, but merely outward conformity and submission, it was the inevitable result of this state of things that the ideas of *religion* and of *truth*,—of pious demeanour, and of sincere

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[1] A late writer, who professes a great regard for Christianity, would have all young persons kept in ignorance that any one ever doubted Christianity! and thinks that, if we neglect this sage advice, we shall run a serious risk of making our children infidels, by laying before them the evidences of their religion. He forgets that a child cannot read the New Testament without learning that "some believed the words that were spoken, *and some believed not*;" and that no one can, in these days, be so completely debarred from all knowledge of history as not to hear of the French at the Revolution abjuring Christianity, and of multitudes of their Priests professing unbelief.

And—as to saying that inquiry must lead to unbelief—it is strange that such writers should not perceive than an admission of this kind, coming from a professed friend to Christianity, tends more to shake men's faith in it than all the attacks of all the avowed infidels in the world put together. For, what would such a writer say of some professed friend coming forward as his advocate, and saying, "my friend here is a veracious and worthy man, and there is no foundation for any of the charges brought against him; and his integrity is fully believed in by persons who thoroughly trust him, and who have never thought of reasoning or inquiring about his character at all: but of all things, *do not make any investigation* into his character: for the more you inquire and examine, the less likely most people will be to believe in his integrity!" — *Cautions for the Times*, No. 29, p. 471, 472.

[2] Rom. i. 25.

belief,—should come to be completely disjoined in men's minds: and that they should even be somewhat startled at the very pretension to *truth as resting on evidence*, in any religion, and at the requisition of *faith* in it, *on the ground of its truth*. It was what they had never been used to. Philosophers of the most discordant tenets, poets of all descriptions, politicians and other men of business, amidst all the variety of their views and conduct, had always concurred in maintaining the popular religions, and in maintaining them on any other ground than that of truth: "The worship of the gods is an institution of our country;—these rights are venerable from their antiquity[1];—the neglect of them would argue disrespect for our ancestors, and contempt for the laws;—a respect for religion is useful for maintaining due subordination among the people:"—These, and such as these, were their arguments; and the conclusion accordingly drawn was, that every man *ought to worship* the gods according to the established institutions: truth, and belief in the truth, seem, in this matter, to have scarcely entered their minds[2].

Pilate accordingly seems to have been perplexed by our Lord's reply, stating that He had come into the world for the purpose of bearing "witness to the truth." His inquiry, "What is truth?" does not seem (as an eminent writer imagines) to have been made in jest[3]. The Roman Governor was evidently in no jesting mood, nor at all disposed to treat Jesus with contempt; but (for whatever reason) was very seriously intent on investigating his case, and procuring his acquittal. Whether there be sufficient ground or not, for the conjecture of some, that he was in expectation of Jesus

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[1] Such was the remark of Tacitus respecting the religion of the Jews: "Hi ritus, quoquo modo inducti, vetustate defenduntur;" a description much more suitable to the pagan religions; both in respect of the fact and of the opinions of the respective votaries. It was the boast of the Jews that they had "the form of knowledge and of the *truth*, in the Law." Rom. ii. 20.

[2] I have treated more fully of this point in the Essays (4th Series) on the *Dangers*, &c., especially in the Appendix, Note F., and also in Essay I. On the *Kingdom of Christ*.

[3] See Annotation on Bacon's first Essay.

assuming the temporal sovereignty by the employment of those miraculous powers of which no one could have been ignorant, and was disposed, from views of personal aggrandizement, to favour his pretensions[1]; at any rate it is plain he was endeavouring to learn what his designs and pretensions were; and hence, eagerly asked, catching, as it were, at his words, "Art thou a king then?" The answer, in which Jesus claims to be a minister of the truth, seems to have disappointed and perplexed him: "What is truth?" he replied; as much as to say, "What has truth to do with the present business? I wish for information as to your claims and objects;—what sovereignty it is that you pretend to, or aim at; and you tell me about Truth; what is that to the purpose?"

On this and on other occasions, our Lord points out Truth as, in an especial manner, the characteristic of his religion; "If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free;" "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life."—"They that worship God must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth."—"When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all Truth."—"And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth." His great Adversary, on the other hand, is designated by Him, as "a liar, and the father of lies." And the Apostles of Christ, in like manner, perpetually make use of the words "Truth," and "Faith," to designate the christian religion: *e.g.* "God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth." 1 Tim. ii. 4. "Having your loins girt about with Truth." Ephes. vi. 14. "They received not the *love of Truth*, that they might be saved." 2 Thess. ii. 10. "Chosen to salvation, through belief of the Truth." 2 Thess. ii. 13. "After we have received the knowledge of the Truth." Heb. x. 26. "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth." 1 Pet. i. 22. "The way of Truth shall be evil-spoken

[1] See Discourse on the *Treason of Judas Iscariot.*

of." 2 Pet. ii. 2. "Hereby we know that we are of the Truth." 1 John iii. 19, &c. By all which, more, I conceive, was implied than that the religion *is* true, and is the *only* true one, and that faith in it is required; in the present day this would be implied by the very circumstance of preaching any religion; but in those days the very *pretension* to truth,—the very *demand* of faith, were characteristic distinctions of the Gospel: the Heathen mythology not only *was* not true, but was not even supported as true: it not only *deserved* no faith, but it *demanded* none. It was needful, therefore, to inform and remind men not merely of the *strength* of the Gospel claims, but of the *nature* of those claims;—to point out not only the *force* of the evidence in its favour, but its appeal to evidence. And when our Lord adds "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice," He is evidently describing the *subjects* of his kingdom. As it was a "kingdom not of this world," so, its subjects were to be, not necessarily Jews, or inhabitants of any particular country, but such as were "of the truth;" that is, persons sincerely willing and earnestly desirous, to seek and to embrace *whatever* should be shown to be a true religion. And this is plain from his saying, not, "every one that heareth my voice is of the truth," but the converse. His disciples *became* such, in *consequence* of their being, in the sense just described, "of the truth."

Many, indeed, of our Lord's expressions concerning the truth of his religion, have a reference rather to the *types* and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation, than to the *fables* of the Heathen mythology. As contrasted with these last, Christianity was *Truth* as opposed to *falsehood;* as contrasted with the Jewish system, it was *The Truth*, in the sense of "Reality," as distinguished from the *emblems*,—symbols,—representations —of that reality;—from the "shadow of good things to come," contained in the Levitical Law[1]. In this sense it is that the

[1] See Hinds's *Catechists' Manual*, (p. 264,) a book which, in my judgment, no young clergyman or master of a family should be without.

Apostle tells us "the law was given by Moses, but grace and *truth* came by Jesus Christ:" and this also was probably the chief import of our Lord's expression, "the truth shall make you free;" *i.e.*, free from the precise and minute directions, and burdensome ceremonial, of the Mosaic Law, which was instituted for the very purpose of shadowing forth, and preparing the way for, the glorious *truths*, or *realities*, of the Gospel.

This consideration, however, does not lessen the force of what has been said respecting the prominent place assigned to the "truth" of Christianity as characteristic of the religion. Its truth, in the sense of reality contrasted with type, and substance with shadow, implies its truth as opposed to falsehood also. It was the same quality that distinguished it from the more *imperfect revelations* of the "Law" on one side, and from the fictions and misconceptions of the Pagans on the other: "the truth as it is in Jesus[1]" was to supersede both the heathen idolatry, by destroying it, and "the Law and the Prophets," not by destroying indeed but by fulfilling them.

And it should be carefully borne in mind, that though the reiterated allusions to "truth" were in a great degree called forth by the strong contrast which the new religion presented, in this particular, to those at that time opposed to it, the characteristic itself must equally belong to the same religion at all times. The Gospel itself is always and everywhere the same; though particular times and places may require that this or that particular feature of it should be especially *pointed out* and dwelt on. Even so, creeds or sets of articles, employed as a Symbol or test of orthodoxy, may vary, and have varied, according to the emergencies occasioned by the prevalence of particular errors; though the absolute and intrinsic soundness of the articles of faith themselves must be always the same. Temporary or local circumstances are the cause, not of any Article's *being* or not being a part of the christian faith, but of

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[1] Ep. to Ephes. iv. 21.

its being a part which it is needful or not needful to *set forth* prominently, and insist on[1].

Liability of Christians to act inconsistently with this characteristic, by not steadily following truth.

§ 2. But how, it may be said, do these considerations affect us Christians of the present day? We, it is to be hoped, are not chargeable with that culpable carelessness about truth, especially in religious matters, which characterised the ancients. We do *believe* in Jesus as the "Way, and the Truth, and the Life."

Let it be remembered, however, that, as the ancient heathen are not the standard by which we are to be measured, so, it is not our superiority to them that will at once acquit us. They had many excuses of which we have none, for their disregard of truth: in particular, they knew not (as we do) of any religion that did challenge inquiry, and appeal to evidence, and demand well-grounded and firm belief; that taught them to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is right," and to be "ready to give a reason of their hope." Do Christians, then, in this respect show themselves worthy of their peculiar advantages? Do they speak and act altogether consistently with a religion which is built on *Faith* in the *Truth?* The professors of such a religion ought not merely to believe it in sincerity, but to adhere scrupulously to Truth in the *means* employed on every occasion, as well as in the ends proposed; and to follow fearlessly *wherever* Truth may lead.

Now we should recollect that most of the pretended miracles, the "pious frauds," as they are called, perpetrated by many, are, or at least were, in the first instance, the work of men who were sincere believers in the truth of their religion; it is, indeed, on this ground alone that a *pious* fraud can be so called: but they were men who knew "not what manner of spirit they were of;" they sought to promote, by means of falsehood, the cause of Him who lived and died for the Truth:

[1] See Note A, at the end of this Essay.

they believed the Gospel to have come from God, but wanted faith in his power and care to support and prosper it; and turned aside from the straight path of sincerity, to seek for the (supposed) expedient, by the crooked roads of worldly policy. But still, though most unchristian in their spirit,—though they had "neither part nor lot in this matter, but were in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity,"—their general belief in Christianity was, doubtless, in most instances, sincere; and I have adverted to their case for the very purpose of pointing out the important circumstance, that the fullest *conviction of the truth of the cause in which we may be engaged, is no security against our sliding into falsehood*, unless we are sedulous in forming and cherishing a habit of loving and reverencing, and strictly adhering to truth[1].

Protestants, however, in these times, it may be said, have no pretended miracles—practise no pious frauds. But how far is this (supposed the fact to be strictly so) to be attributed to a genuine detestation of falsehood, as odious in *his* sight, who lived and died in the cause of Truth, and to a firm reliance on his providence; and how far, to a conviction, furnished by experience, that fraud is, in the end, detrimental to the cause it is designed to serve, and that in these days its success would be especially short-lived? To what degree each man is in each instance actuated by a love of truth, or by considerations of seeming expediency, can be fully known only to the Searcher of hearts: it is only by the most rigid self-examination that we can approach to the knowledge of this in our own case; and it is so far only as the former motive operates that we are acting on christian principle.

It is undoubtedly a just maxim that in the long run "honesty is the best policy;" but he whose *practice is governed by that maxim* is not an *honest man*. And it may be added, that a *steady and uniform* adherence to honesty, never *will* result from that maxim. He who adheres to what is right,

[1] See Essay (Third Series) on *Pious Frauds*.

because it is right, will be rewarded by afterwards perceiving that he has taken the wisest course. But to those who seek, in the first instance, for the best policy, it *is not given* to perceive, in all cases, that honesty *is* the best policy. The maxim therefore, though true and valuable, is never, to any one, the habitual and constant guide of conduct. He who is honest is always *before* it; and he who is not, will often be far *behind* it.

Necessity of self-examination as to this point.

§ 3 To suggest a few topics for the self-examination I have alluded to, may not be unsuitable with a view to the inquiries we are engaged in. That all, even of the learned and sagacious, have not arrived at true conclusions respecting the doctrines of Scripture, is at once evident from the great *diversity* of their conclusions. It is necessary to consider, therefore, how we may best escape being of the number of those who fall into such various errors; —how we may be best qualified for profiting by the lessons of Him whose "Word is Truth." And this must surely be by a fervent desire and sedulous watchfulness to acquire and preserve a sincere, unbiassed, and candid disposition. Without this, the highest ability, combined with the most laborious study, will do nothing towards the attainment of that object.

That we may not, however, be led into too wide a field of discussion, it should be observed, that I do not propose to inculcate the duty of veracity in private life; or to enter on any metaphysical disquisition on the nature of Truth universally, or on what may be regarded as the different species of it; or to treat of the various kinds of evidence by which it is to be established; but simply to speak of the importance, and the difficulty, of cultivating and establishing as a habit, a sincere love of Truth for its own sake, and a steady thorough-going adherence to it in all philosophical, and especially in religious inquiries.

The first step towards attaining this state of mind, and ascertaining how far we have attained it, must evidently be, a strong conviction of its value, together with a distrust of our-

selves. If we either care not to be lovers of Truth, or take for granted that we are such, without taking any pains to acquire the habit, it is not likely that we ever shall acquire it. I must here, therefore, briefly notice some objections which I have heard urged against the very effort to cultivate such a habit as I am recommending; though, in fact, they arise from misapprehension, and are directed against a mistaken view of the subject.

Objections to the principle of universally pursuing and propagating truth.

(1) The first is, that we cannot be required to make *Truth* our main object, but *happiness;* —that our ultimate end is, not the mere knowledge of what is *true*, but the attainment of what is *good*, to ourselves and to others. But this, when urged as an objection against the views here taken, is evidently founded on a mistake as to the meaning of the maxim, that Truth should be sought for its own sake. It is evident, in the first place, that I am not speaking of the pursuit of *all* truth on all subjects. It would be ridiculous for a single individual to aim at universal knowledge; or even at the knowledge of all that is within the reach of the human faculties, and worthy of human study. The question is respecting the pursuit of truth, in each subject, on which each person desires *to make up his mind and form an opinion.* And secondly, the purport of the maxim that, in these points, truth should be our object, is, not that mere barren knowledge without practice,—truth without any *ulterior* end, should be sought; but that truth should be sought and followed confidently, not, in each instance, only so far as we *perceive* it to be expedient, and from motives of policy, but with a full conviction both that it is, in the end, always expedient, with a view to the attainment of ulterior objects, (no permanent advantage being attainable by departing from it,) and also, that, even if some end, otherwise advantageous, *could* be promoted by such a departure, *that* alone would constitute it an evil;—that truth, in short, is in itself, independently of its results, preferable to error;—that honesty claims a preference to deceit, even without taking into account its being the best policy.

(2) Another objection, if it can be so called, is, that a perfectly candid and unbiassed state of mind—a habit of judging in each case entirely according to the evidence, is *unattainable*. But the same may be said of every other virtue: a perfect regulation of any one of the human passions is probably not more attainable than perfect candour; but we are not, therefore, to give a loose to the passions; we are not to relax our efforts for the attainment of any virtue, on the ground that, after all, we shall fall short of perfection.

(3) Another objection which I have heard is, that it is not even desirable, were it possible, to bring the mind into a state of perfectly unbiassed indifference, so as to weigh the evidence in each case with complete impartiality. The evidence, for instance, for the truth of the christian religion, it is said, a good man must wish, and ought to wish, to find satisfactory; one who loves and practises virtue, cannot be, and ought not to be, *indifferent* as to the question whether there be or be not a God who will reward it.

This objection arises, I conceive, from an indistinct and confused notion of the sense of the terms employed[1]. A candid and unbiassed state of mind, which is sometimes called *indifference* or impartiality, *i.e.* of the *judgment*, does not imply an indifference of the *will*,—an absence of all wish on either side; but merely an absence of all influence of the wishes in forming our decision,—all leaning of the judgment on the side of inclination,—all perversion of the evidence in consequence. That we should *wish* to find truth on one side rather than the other, is in many cases not only unavoidable, but commendable; but to *think* that true which we wish, without impartially weighing the evidence on both sides, is undeniably a folly, though a very common one. If a mode of effectual and speedy cure be proposed to a sick man, he cannot but wish that the result of his inquiries concerning it may be a well-grounded conviction of the safety and efficacy of the remedy prescribed;

[1] See *Logic*, Appendix. Article *Indifference*.

it would be no mark of wisdom to be indifferent to the restoration of health; but if his wishes should lead him (as is frequently the case) to put implicit confidence in the remedy without any just grounds for it, he would deservedly be taxed with folly. Or again, if a scheme be proposed to any one for embarking his capital in some speculation by which he is to gain immense wealth, he will doubtless wish to find that the expectations held out are well-founded; but we should call him very imprudent, if (as many do) he should suffer this wish to bias his judgment, and should believe, on insufficient grounds, the fair promises held out to him: his wishes, we should say, were both natural and wise: but since they could not render the event more probable, it was most unwise to allow them to influence his decision. In like manner, (to take the instance above alluded to,) a good man will indeed *wish* to find the evidence of the christian Religion satisfactory; but a wise man will not for that reason *think* it satisfactory, but will weigh the evidence the more carefully, on account of the importance of the question.

By confounding together these two very distinct things, *indifference* of the *will*, and indifference of the *judgment*, (or, which amounts to the same, taking for granted that the two are inseparably conjoined, and must be present or absent, together,) I have known a person maintain, with some plausibility, the inexpediency, with a view to the attainment of Truth, of educating people, or appointing teachers to instruct them in any particular systems or theories, of astronomy, medicine, religion, morals, politics, &c., on the ground that a man must wish to believe and to find good reasons for believing, the system in which he has been trained, and which he has been engaged in teaching; and that this wish must prejudice his understanding in favour of it, and consequently render him an incompetent judge of truth.

It would follow from this principle, that no physician should be trusted, who is not utterly indifferent whether his patient recovers or dies; since, else, he must wish to find reasons

for hoping favourably from the mode of treatment pursued: no plan for the benefit of the Public, proposed by a *philanthropist*, should be listened to; since such a man cannot but wish it may be successful, &c.

No doubt the judgment is often biassed by the inclinations; but it is possible, and it should be our endeavour, to guard against this bias. And, by the way, it is utterly a mistake to suppose that the bias is always *in favour* of the conclusion wished for; it is often in the contrary direction. There is in some minds a tendency to unreasonable doubt in cases where their wishes are strong;—a morbid distrust of evidence which they are especially anxious to find conclusive: for example, groundless fears for the health or safety of an ardently-beloved child, will frequently, on account of their earnest wish for his welfare, distress anxious parents. Different temperaments (sometimes varying with the state of health of each individual) lead towards these opposite miscalculations. Each of us probably has a natural leaning towards one or the other (often towards both, at different times) of these infirmities;—the over-estimate, or under-estimate of the reasons in favour of a conclusion we earnestly desire to find true. Our aim should be, not to fly from one extreme to the other, but to avoid both, and to give a verdict according to the evidence; preserving the indifference of the Judgment, even when the Will *cannot*, and indeed *should* not be indifferent.

There are persons, again, (though some of my readers will, perhaps, be disposed to doubt the fact,) who, in supposed compliance with the precept, "lean not to thine own understanding," regard it as a duty to suppress all exercise of the intellectual powers, in every case where the feelings are at variance with the conclusions of reason. They deem it right to "consult the heart more than the head:" *i.e.*, to surrender themselves, advisedly, to the bias of any prejudice that may chance to be present: thus, deliberately and on principle, burying in the earth the talent entrusted to them, and hiding under a bushel the candle that God has lighted up in the

mind. But it is not necessary to dwell on such a case, both because it is not, I trust, a common one, and also because those who *are* thus disposed, are clearly beyond the reach of argument, since they think it wrong to listen to it.

I am far from recommending presumptuous inquiries into things beyond the reach of our faculties;—attempts to be "wise above what is written;"—or groundless confidence in the certainty of our conclusions: but we cannot even exercise the requisite humility in acquiescing in revealed doctrines, unless we employ our reason to ascertain what they are; and there is surely at least as much presumption in measuring everything by our own feelings, fancies, and prejudices, as by our own reasonings.

(4) Lastly, another objection sometimes brought, not so much against the pursuit, as against the propagation of truth, is, that the minds of many men are incapable of rightly apprehending it; that the attempt to teach some truths to such hearers as are not qualified for receiving them, and to remove some errors which they are not ripe for perceiving to be such, would only excite their disgust towards every thing they might hear from such instructors; or that some might assent to what they heard, while they put the most mischievously false interpretation upon it; or, lastly, that they might misapply even what they had rightly understood: as persons ignorant of medicine often do mischief by administering, without judgment, some powerful remedy, whose efficacy they have witnessed. Even thus, it may be said, will the unlearned, when they have been taught to reject some long-established error, proceed, when their minds are once unsettled, to reject well-grounded doctrines also; and will apply the arguments by which they have been convinced in one case, to another, perhaps very different, (though they are incapable of understanding that difference,) so as to produce the most erroneous results[1].

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[1] See Dr. West's Discourse on *Reserve*, above referred to. See also the Index to the *Tracts for the Times*.

Accordingly, it is urged, our Lord Himself and his Apostles abstained from teaching everything at once to their hearers, because they "were not as yet able to bear them:" and even so important a doctrine as the extension of the Gospel to the Gentile world, was not fully made known to the Apostles themselves, for several years after they had received their commission.

All this is, in a certain sense, true; and as far as it is true, is no contradiction of the principle I have laid down, but an application of it. For to teach anything which, though in itself true, will inevitably be misunderstood by the hearers, is, in *reality*, to propagate, not truth but error; and if our teaching has in any case a necessary tendency to lead a certain class of hearers into such mistakes on other points as we have no power to guard against, we are not enlightening, but leading them into darkness. If we were to suppose a case (to resort to an illustration I have elsewhere employed[1]) of our informing a rustic that the sun stands still, while, for some reason or other, we had no means of teaching him that the earth turns round, he would evidently be more perplexed than instructed, and would be more than ever at a loss to understand the alternations of day and night.

To shew that what has here been said is not a statement framed for the occasion, in order to meet objections, I will take the liberty of citing a passage to the same purpose from my *Bampton Lectures*, published in 1822.—"Persons of inferior powers and attainments may be led, not to knowledge, but to error, by hastily proposing to them such statements and explanations as surpass their capacity: though they may be intelligible and instructive to the abler and more advanced. No vain clamours, therefore, about deceiving the people,—no groundless charges of keeping the vulgar in ignorance, and preaching a different gospel to different persons, should deter us from following at once the dictates of sound sense, and the

[1] See Appendix to Archbishop King's Discourse on *Predestination*, No. 1.

example of St. Paul; or induce us so to perplex and confuse 'those who are weak in the faith,' as really to incur the blame of deceiving them, for the sake of avoiding the appearance of it. For, it should be remembered that, practically speaking, all truth is relative: that which may be to one man a true statement of any doctrine, may be, in effect, false to another, if it be such as cannot but lead him to form false notions; and that which gives him, if not a perfectly correct notion of things as they are, yet the nearest to this that he is capable of, may be regarded as, to him, true[1]."

If, then, on these principles, we withhold *for a time* some part of the Truth from those who are not able to bear it,—if we add "line upon line, and precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little,"—striving gradually to qualify the learner for a more full communication;—if we labour patiently to wear away prejudices by little and little, when the attempt to eradicate them abruptly would be unsuccessful, or pernicious,—we are pursuing that method of inculcating truth which is sanctioned by Christ and his Apostles. But if we make the ignorance, weakness, or prejudice of men a plea for suppressing or disguising truth, or for conniving at error, without labouring at the same time to remove those obstacles;—if we plead that they are not yet *ripe* for this or that doctrine, and expect them to *become* ripe, like the fruits of the earth, by mere *waiting*;—if we are content to leave them *permanently* under the influence of delusion,—to postpone, *sine die*, as the phrase is, the communication of religious truths,—to wait *indefinitely* for some unforeseen favourable conjuncture which we make no exertions to bring about,—we are proceeding in direct contradiction to the spirit of the Gospel, and the example of its author. "I have yet many things," said He, "to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them *now*;" but He did, by his Spirit, gradually impart this knowledge to them afterwards; not to some subsequent generation, but to those

[1] Lect. IV., pp. 129, 130. Third Edit.

very same individuals. "I have fed you with milk and not with meat," says St. Paul, "for ye were not able to bear it; neither *yet* are ye able;" he evidently implies a hope that they (*i.e.* not some future generation, but those very individuals) *will* be able to bear it: nay, he is evidently reproaching them for not being already better qualified for the reception of divine Truth. Indeed the very similitude of *babes*, of itself draws our attention, our hopes, and our endeavours, towards a progressive growth into manhood.

Danger of men's flattering themselves without sufficient grounds that they are lovers of truth; maxim of making it not the second but the first question, what is the truth?

§ 4 When, however, we have made up our minds as to the importance of seeking in every case for truth, with an unprejudiced mind, the greatest difficulty still remains; which arises from the confidence we are apt to feel that we have already done this, and have sought for truth with success. For, every one must of course be convinced of the truth of his own opinion, if it be properly called *his* opinion; and yet the variety of men's opinions furnishes a proof how many must be mistaken. If any one then would guard against mistake as far as his intellectual faculties will allow, he must make it, *not the second, but the first question* in each case, "Is this true?" It is not enough to believe what you maintain; you must maintain what you believe; and maintain it *because* you believe it; and that, on the most careful and impartial review of the evidence on both sides. For any one may bring himself to believe almost any thing that he is inclined to believe, and thinks it becoming or expedient to maintain[1]. It makes all the difference, therefore, whether we *begin* or *end* with the inquiry as to the truth of our doctrines. To express the same maxim in other words, it is one thing to

[1] Some persons accordingly who describe themselves — in one sense, correctly — as "*following* the dictates of conscience," are doing so only in the same sense in which a person who is driving in a carriage may be said to *follow* his horses, which go in whatever direction he guides them.

wish to have Truth on our side, and another thing to wish sincerely to be *on the side of Truth*. There is no genuine love of truth implied in the former. Truth is a powerful auxiliary, such as every one wishes to have on his side; every one is rejoiced to find, and therefore often succeeds in convincing himself, that the principles he is already disposed to adopt,—the notions he is inclined to defend, may be maintained as true. A determination to "*obey* the Truth," and to follow wherever she may lead, is not so common. In this consists the genuine love of truth; and this can be realized in practice only by *postponing* all other questions to that which ought ever to come foremost, "What is the Truth?" The minds of most men are *pre-occupied* by some feeling or other which influences their judgment, (either on the side of truth or of error, as it may happen,) and enlists their learning and ability on the side, whatever it may be, which they are predisposed to adopt.

Obstacles to the cultivation of this habit. Dislike of doubt.

(1) One of the most common of these feelings is an aversion to *doubt*;—a dislike of having the judgment kept in suspense; which, combined with indolence in investigation, induces the great mass of mankind to *make up their minds* on a variety of points, almost according to the first suggestion that is offered. As the illustrious Greek historian expresses it, in language which will hardly admit of an adequate translation, "the generality of mankind are so averse to the labour of investigating truth, that they are willing rather to adopt any statement that is ready-prepared for their acceptance[1]." But he who would cultivate an habitual devotion to Truth, must be solicitous in the first place to avoid error; and consequently must in all cases prefer *doubt* to the reception of falsehood, or to the admission of any conclusion on insufficient evidence. One who has an aversion to doubt, and is anxious to make up his mind, and to come to *some* conclusion on every question that is discussed, must be content

[1] Ἀταλαίπωρος τοῖς πολλοῖς ἡ ζήτησις τῆς ἀλήθειας, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἕτοιμα μᾶλλον τρέπονται.—Thucyd.

to rest many of his opinions on very slight grounds; since no one individual is competent to investigate fully all disputable points. Such a one, therefore, is no lover of truth; nor is in the right way to attain it on any point. *He* may more reasonably hope this, who, though he may on many points perceive some (and perhaps a great) preponderance of probability on this or that side, is contented to come to a decisive conclusion only on those few which he has been enabled thoroughly to investigate[1].

The fault I have been speaking of, is one which men are the less likely to detect in themselves, from this circumstance; that in many practical cases it is necessary to come to *some* decision, speedily, even though we may not have before us the fullest evidence that we could desire, or even that we might hope, were more time allowed us, to obtain. The Physician may be compelled to prescribe, or the General to give his orders, immediately, and without waiting to examine all the reasons on both sides; because delay would be as pernicious as mistake. In cases of this kind, the utmost we can do is to make up our minds according to the best reasons that occur; and though we are not called on, even then, to come to any certain conclusion in our own minds, if there are no sufficient grounds for it; yet we must *act* as if we *were* certain. If, in a journey, we have no means of knowing certainly which of two or three roads will lead us aright, we must yet chuse one, because we are certain we cannot reach the journey's end by standing still. So also, if we are in doubt whether thieves will come or not, we bar the door, as if we were certain they would; because to neglect this, would be to stake all on the event of their not coming. In like manner, he who has doubts about the truth of Christianity, is bound in prudence to endeavour to act as if it were true. For in these, and many other cases of practice, "not to decide, is to decide[2]." And the habit is often in this manner acquired, of forming our

[1] Essay IV. (Third Series), § 8.

[2] Bacon.

opinions as hastily as our *practical decisions*; and that too, even in cases where no immediate step is necessarily to be taken—no danger, equal to the danger of error, to be incurred by remaining in suspense[1].

Love of originality.

(2) To that dislike of doubt which has been mentioned as an obstacle to the cultivation of an habitual love of Truth, many others may be added which augment the difficulty. In many it is the desire of *originality*, heightened sometimes into the love of paradox, that pre-occupies the mind. They are zealous for Truth, provided it be some truth brought to light by themselves. There are some accordingly, who have been right where prevailing opinions are erroneous; and erroneous where the rest of the world think rightly. And such persons often satisfy themselves that they are guarded against this excess, by the severity of their judgments on their neighbour's originality,—by unsparing rejection of every paradox, and every novelty, proceeding from another. A *crude* theory or opinion, means, in their language, one which (being new) has not first occurred to themselves.

Excessive deference for authority.

(3) Others again, and they are more numerous, are unduly biassed by an excessive respect for venerated authority;—by an undue regard for any belief that is ancient,—that is established,—that is reckoned orthodox,—that has been maintained by eminent men: they are overpowered, in short, by the "argumentum ad verecundiam." I mean not, of course, that the judgment of able men, and that of numerous independent authorities, furnishes no valid argument; only, that it should not supersede argument;—that every other description of evidence should be called in;—and that we should not think ourselves bound to adopt an opinion merely because it has been held by many before us[2]. And some are so biassed by authority, that they not only admit carelessly as true what they have not ex-

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[1] Essay on the *Omission of Creeds, &c., in Scripture*, § 9.

[2] Essay IV. (Fourth Series), § 8.

amined, but even tolerate a considerable admixture of what they themselves perceive to be untrue: "I had rather be mistaken in company with Plato, than hold the truth along with those men[1]," implies no uncommon kind of feeling.

And moreover, any errors which have long and extensively prevailed, are by many regarded as of no great practical consequence; because, they think, if these had led to any ill result, it would have been long ago manifest. This is indeed far from being universally the case; for many doctrinal errors do lead to practical evils which are not referred, even by those who perceive them, to the causes whence they sprung[2]. Protestants, for instance, perceive the immoral effects which naturally spring, in Romanist countries, from the doctrines of purgatory, indulgences, image-worship, &c.; but a sincere Romanist, though he cannot but perceive the existence of many of these immoralities, is usually altogether blind to their connexion with those causes. And the Protestant who wonders at this blindness, is perhaps himself equally blind in some similar case. But though, as has been said, the alleged harmlessness of long-established errors is in general very rashly inferred, still it commonly *is* inferred; and there are not a few who have more dread of anything that savours of novelty, even when they perceive nothing objectionable in it, than of what is generally received, even when they know it to be unsound. And hence, he is the most likely to be, by such persons, accounted a safe man, not whose views are on the whole the most reasonable, but who is free from all errors, *except vulgar* errors.

It may be added, that the desire to be considered "orthodox," is the more likely to mislead, from the coincidence of that term, *etymologically*, with *rectitude of faith*. But popularly, when a man is spoken of as "orthodox," this is understood to imply conformity to what is *received and maintained* as the right faith, by the majority of the most influential

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1. "Errare malo cum Platone, quam cum istis vera sentire."
2. See Appendix to Essay II. On the *Kingdom of Christ*.

theologians of the Age and Country in which he lives, or in which those live who so describe him. This *may* indeed coincide perfectly with the right sense of Scripture; but we cannot be sure that it will always be so, unless we regard those theologians as infallible. *These* then must be made the standard,—their mode of study, and their interpretations followed—by one who is bent on being "*orthodox.*" He, again, whose great object is to be *scriptural*, must make the Scriptures his standard; to be studied—with all the best helps indeed that he can obtain—but with a thorough devotion to his object, and a resolution to sacrifice, if needful, any thing and every thing to that.

But whichever standard a man adopts, let him not aim at the unattainable object of "serving *two* Masters." Let him not say that the "orthodox" and the "scriptural" are not *adverse*, like "God and Mammon:" which, by the way, are *not* necessarily adverse; since the same conduct which a sense of christian duty suggests will often conduce to worldly prosperity also. It is not because they are hostile, and necessarily lead different ways, that no man can serve two Masters; but simply because they *are* two, and not *one*. The attempt is like that of seeking to make both gold and silver the standard of currency. Their relative values vary but seldom, and very slightly; but the slightest variation throws all accounts into confusion if we attempt to make *both* a standard.

In proportion as pure religion prevails in any Age or Country, the "orthodox" and the "scriptural" approach towards coincidence: and the adherents of the two, respectively, approach in respect of the *doctrines themselves* which they hold; but still, they go on different *principles;* like one man going by the Clock, and another, by the Sun-dial. And he who aims at conforming to each of *two* standards, is "a double-minded man," and will be "unstable in all his ways."

The temptation to fall into this snare is one which calls for more vigilance, in one respect, than a temptation to do any thing that is *in itself* manifestly wrong, and which ought to

be *avoided* altogether. For, agreement in faith with those around us, it would be as wrong to *shun* as to *seek;* and it is so manifestly desirable in point of present comfort and convenience, that no one can be censured for rejoicing to find himself so situated without any sacrifice of principle. Now it is difficult for a man to keep himself from *seeking* for that which he cannot help *wishing* for;—*aiming* at that which he feels he would rejoice at. And as soon as he does this,—as soon as his *efforts* are directed the same way as his wishes—he has immediately begun to set up a new standard, and is trying to serve two Masters.

The two faults which have been just noticed—the endeavour after originality, and after orthodoxy—that is, a certain degree of each, are not unfrequently combined. The hasty adoption of striking novelties on some occasions, is not incompatible with a blind adherence to the received doctrine on others. All men have been told that wisdom consists in preserving a middle course between opposite extremes; and the weak, the uncandid, and the unthinking, often congratulate themselves on having attained this happy medium, by the mimic wisdom of sliding alternately into each extreme. True wisdom would tell us not to receive one opinion because it is *old*, and another because it is *new;* but to receive and reject none on either ground, and to inquire sedulously, in each case, what is *true*.

It may be added that some men are apt to aim at preserving the proper *Medium* by keeping themselves at an *equal distance* from each Extreme. "Men are apt to look to those who, on each side, hold the most extreme opinions, or practically carry some principle to the greatest excess, and then, resolving to be led by neither, think to preserve the most perfect moderation—to attain the true '*via media*'—by keeping themselves *equidistant* from both. If in each point they are as far removed from the extremes of one party as of another, they conclude that they are steering the right course between them.

"But such persons, instead of being led by *neither* party,

are more properly described as being led by *both*. The real medium of rectitude is not to be attained by geometrical measurement. The varieties of human error have no power to fix the exact place of truth. On the contrary, it happens in respect of religion as well as in all other subjects, that each party will maintain some things that are perfectly true and right, and others that are wholly wrong and mischievous; and that in other points again the one party, or the other, will be much the more remote from the truth. So that any one who studies to keep himself in every point just *half-way between* two contending parties, will probably be as often in the wrong as either of them.

"And this caution is the more important, because it will often happen that the truth, and the error, of any party, will be found intimately blended together in respect of each single point of doctrine; so that the one party, and their opponents also, will be, each, quite right in one respect, and utterly wrong in another[1]."

It is a truism, but one often practically forgotten, that there is *no medium between truth and falsehood*. When indeed opposite *errors* are held by two parties, the truth will lie somewhere between them: but when—as is often the case—a *true* view of some point is taken by one of them and opposed by the other, to aim at the *mean*, will be in fact seeking a mean between truth and falsehood. There may be a medium indeed between that truth and *the particular error* maintained by some particular party: but this "*via media*" will of course be itself erroneous.

(4) I have elsewhere noticed a kind of false humility, by aiming at which some are drawn aside from the pursuit of truth. "The pride of human reason" is a phrase very much in the mouth of some persons, who seem to think they are effectually humbling themselves by an excessive distrust of all exercise of the *intellect*, while they resign themselves freely to

[1] *Charge* of 1843.

the guidance of what they call the heart; that is, their prejudices, passions, inclinations, and fancies. But the feelings are as much a *part of man's constitution* as his reason; *every* part of our nature will equally lead us wrong, if operating uncontrolled. If a man employs his reason, not in ascertaining what God *has* revealed in Scripture, but in conjecturing what might be, or ought to be, the divine dispensations, he is employing his reason wrongly, and will err accordingly. But this is not the *only* source of error. He who, to avoid this, gives up the use of his reason, and believes or disbelieves, adopts or rejects, according to what suits his feelings, taste, will, and fancy, is no less an idolater of *himself* than the other; his feelings, &c. being a part of himself, no less than his reason[1]. We may, if we please, call the one of these a "Rationalist," and the other an "Irrationalist;" but there is as much of the pride of self-idolatry in the one as in the other. The Greeks and Romans were indeed wretched idolaters, in their adoration of the beautiful statues of Jupiter and Minerva; but the Egyptians, who adored those of an ox and a hawk, were not the less idolaters. The Jews, relying on the decision of learned Rabbis, and the Pythagorean, who yielded implicit reverence to the dictates of the sage, did not more exalt Man into an Oracle, in the place of God, than the Mussulmans, who pay a like reverence to idiots and madmen. Each part of our nature should be duly controlled, and kept within its own proper province; and the whole "brought into subjection to Christ," and dedicated to Him. But there is no real christian humility—though there be debasement—in renouncing the exercise of human reason, to follow the dictates of human feeling. The apostle's precept is, "in malice be ye children; but in understanding be ye men."

The error I have been adverting to is worthy of notice, only from the plausibility it derives from the authority of some persons who really do possess cultivated intellectual powers;

[1] See *Logic*, Appendix III.

and therefore, when they declaim on the pride of human reason, are understood not to be disparaging an advantage of which they are destitute. They appear voluntarily divesting themselves of what many would feel a pride in; and thus often conceal from others, as well as from themselves, the spiritual pride with which they not only venerate their own feelings and prejudices, but even load with anathemas all who presume to dissent from them. It is a prostration, not of man's *self* before God, but of one part of himself before another. This kind of humiliation is like the idolatry of the Israelites in the wilderness, "The people *stripped themselves of their golden ornaments* that were upon them, and cast them into the fire; and there came forth this calf[1]." We ought to remember that the disciples were led by the dictates of a sound *understanding* to say, "No man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him:" and thence, to believe and trust and obey Jesus implicitly: but that Peter was led by his *heart* (*i.e.* his inclinations and prejudices) to say, "Be it far from thee, Lord! there shall no such thing happen unto thee."

(5) It is to be remembered also that the intellectual powers are sometimes pressed into the service, as it were, of the feelings, and that a man may be thus misled, in a great measure, through his own ingenuity. Any one who possesses considerable ability, is able, as is well known, to make up a plausible defence of some unsound theory, or unjustifiable measure. "Depend on it," said a shrewd observer when inquired of, what was to be expected from a certain man who had been appointed to some high office, and of whose intelligence he thought more favourably than of his uprightness,—"depend on it, he will never take any step that is bad, without having a very good reason to give for it." Now it is common to warn men,—and they are generally ready enough to take the warning,—against being thus misled by the ingenuity of *another:* but a person of more than ordinary

[1] Note to *Charge* of 1836.

learning and ability, needs to be carefully on his guard against being misled by *his own.* Though conscious, perhaps, of his own power to dress up speciously a bad cause, or an extravagant and fanciful theory, he is conscious also of a corresponding power to distinguish sound reasoning from sophistry. But this will not avail to protect him from convincing himself by ingenious sophistry of his own, if he has allowed himself to adopt some conclusion which pleases his imagination, or favours some passion or self-interest. His own superior intelligence will then be, as I have said, pressed into the service of his inclinations. It is, indeed, no feeble blow that will suffice to destroy a giant; but if a giant resolves to commit suicide, it is a giant that deals the blow.

A man is in danger, therefore,—the more, in proportion to his abilities—of exercising on himself, when under the influence of some passion, a most pernicious oratorical power, by pleading the cause, as it were, before himself, of that passion. Suppose it anger, *e.g.*, that he is feeling: he is naturally disposed to dwell on and amplify the aggravating circumstances of the supposed provocation, so as to make out a good case for himself; a representation such as may—or might, if needed—serve to vindicate him in the eyes of a bystander, and to give him the advantage in a controversy. This of course tends to *heighten* his resentment, and to satisfy him that he "doth well to be angry;" or perhaps to persuade him that he is *not* angry, but is a model of patience under intolerable wrongs. And the man of *superior ingenuity* and eloquence will do this more skilfully than an ordinary man, and will thence be likely to be the more effectually self-deceived: for though he may be superior to the other in judgment, as well as in ingenuity, it is to be remembered that while his *judgment* is likely to be, in his own cause, biassed, and partially blinded, his *ingenuity* is called forth to the utmost.

And the like takes place, if it be selfish cupidity, unjust partiality in favour of a relative or friend, party-spirit, or any other passion, that may be operating. For, universally, men

are but too apt to take more pains in justifying their propensities, than it would cost to control them. And a man of superior powers will often be in this way entrapped by his own ingenuity, like a spider entangled in the web she has herself spun. Most persons are fearful, even to excess, of being misled by the eloquence of another[1]: but an ingenious reasoner ought to be especially fearful of his own. There is no one whom he is likely so much, and so hurtfully, to mislead as himself, if he be not sedulously on his guard against this self-deceit.

Views of expediency.

(6) The greatest, however, of all the obstacles to the habit of following truth, is, the tendency to look in the first instance to the *expedient*. Expediency does not, in reality, stand opposed to Truth, except when made its rival for precedence; but while the genuine lover of Truth always regards *that* as the only sure road to the Expedient, the generality of men look out *first* for what is expedient, and are contented if they can afterwards reconcile that (which, with a biassed mind, they are very likely to accomplish) with a conviction of truth. And this is the sin which most easily besets those who are engaged in the instruction of others; and it besets them the more easily, inasmuch as the consciousness of falsehood, even if it exist in the outset, will very soon wear away. He who does not begin by preaching what he thoroughly believes, will speedily end by believing what he preaches. His habit of discriminating the true from the false,—the well-established from the doubtful,—will soon decay for want of assiduous exercise; and thus inured to the practice of dispensing with complete sincerity for the sake of supposed utility, and accustomed to support true conclusions by *any* premises that offer, he will soon lose, through this faulty practice, even the power of distinguishing what conclusions *are* true[2].

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[1] I have known a man accordingly shun the acquaintance of another of whom he knew no harm, solely from his dread of him as a man who, he imagined, "could prove any thing." Men of a low tone of morality, judging from themselves, take for granted that whoever "has a giant's strength" will not scruple to "use it like a giant."

[2] Essay III. (Third Series) § 6.

Cautionary maxims;

§ 5 The temptations to this fault are so great, the occurrence of it so frequent, and the mischief of it so incalculable, that I cannot, perhaps, better close these remarks, than by classing, under a few comprehensive heads, the cautions to be observed in avoiding it.

No unfair argument to be used.

(1) First, then, one who would cherish in himself an attachment to Truth, must never allow himself either to advance any argument, or to admit and acquiesce in any when advanced by another, which he knows or suspects to be unsound or fallacious; however true the conclusion may be to which it leads,—however convincing the argument may be to those it is addressed to—and however important it may be that they *should* be convinced. It springs from, and it will foster and increase, a want of veneration for truth; it is an affront put on "the Spirit of Truth:" it is a hiring of the idolatrous Syrians to fight the battles of the Lord God of Israel. And it is on this ground that we should adhere to the most scrupulous fairness of statement and argument. He who believes that sophistry will always in the end prove injurious to the cause supported by it, is probably right in that belief; but if it be for that reason that he abstains from it,—if he avoid fallacy, wholly, or partly, through fear of *detection;* it is plain he is no sincere votary of truth.

Nor erroneous notion countenanced:

(2) On the same principle, we are bound never to countenance any erroneous opinion, however seemingly beneficial in its results,—to connive at no salutary delusion (as it may[1] appear,) but to open the eyes (when opportunity offers, and in proportion as it offers) of those we are instructing, to any mistake they may labour under; though it may be one which leads them ultimately to a true result, and to one of which apparently they might otherwise fail. The temptation accordingly to depart from this principle is sometimes excessively strong; because it will often be

[1] See Essay III. (Third Series) § 3.

the case that men will be in some danger, in parting with a long-admitted error, of abandoning, at the same time, some truth they have been accustomed to connect with it. Accordingly, I have heard censure passed on the endeavours to enlighten the adherents of some erroneous Churches, on the ground that many of them thence become atheists, and many, the wildest of fanatics. That this should have been in some instances the case, is highly probable; it is a natural result of the pernicious effects on the mind, of any system of blind uninquiring acquiescence; such a system is an Evil Spirit, which we must expect will cruelly rend and mangle the patient as it comes out of him, and will leave him half-dead at its departure.

Again: the belief in the plenary inspiration of Scripture,—its being properly and literally the "Word of God," merely uttered or committed to writing by the sacred penmen, in the very words supernaturally dictated to them, and the consequent belief in its complete and universal infallibility, not only on religious, but also on historical and philosophical points,—these notions,—which prevail among a large portion of Christians,—are probably encouraged or connived at by very many of those who do not, or at least *did* not originally, in their own hearts, entertain any such belief. But they dread "the unsettling of men's minds;" they fear that they would be unable to distinguish what is, and what is not, matter of inspiration; and, consequently, that their reverence for Scripture and for religion altogether would be totally destroyed: while, on the other hand, the error, they urge, is very harmless; leading to no practical evil, but rather to piety of life.

Incredible as it may seem, it is a fact, that objections have been made to the removal of the vulgar error of regarding the *chapters and verses* as divisions made by the Sacred Writers themselves. Much indistinctness and confusion of thought have often arisen from the practice of reading each chapter as a distinct treatise, or branch of a treatise; though a chapter, in fact, often begins in the middle of an argument, or even of a sentence. But it was urged that it would "unsettle men's minds" to undeceive them.

On a like principle I have known some pious persons object to any alteration of those passages of our (in general excellent) version of the Bible, in which they admit that our translators have mistaken the sense of the Original. It has a tendency, they think, to "unsettle the minds of the vulgar;" who had better be left to receive the Bible,—*i.e.* our Authorized Version of it,—as the Word of God, without any suspicion of the possibility of error in any passage they read; since if once (it is urged) they doubt the infallibility of our translators, they may go on to doubt whether this, and that, or any passage of Scripture may not be mistranslated; till at length the Bible will be, to them, no revelation at all.

This procedure is of a piece with that of the Church of Rome in pronouncing the infallibility of the Vulgate-Version: a step which proved a convenience for the moment, and has placed them in a dilemma ever since; either the admission, or the denial, of any error in the Vulgate, being equally dangerous to the Church's claim of infallibility. The *inexpediency*, in the end, of our proceeding on such a principle in respect of our translation, is to me very clear; but I despair of explaining it to the satisfaction of any one who chuses to try the question on *that* ground. To any one who is resolved to follow honesty for its own sake, it may easily be made to appear in this case, that it is the best policy also[1].

And, doubtless, such feelings as I have been alluding to had a share in inducing the Roman Catholics to retain the Apocrypha in their Bible. Many of the learned among them must surely have known, that these books have no title to be considered as part of the Holy Scriptures; "but they are on the whole," they may have thought, "rather edifying than hurtful; and to reject them might shake men's faith in the whole of Scripture." The same reasoning probably, operates with many of them to induce them to maintain the infallibility of the Church,—the authority of their Traditions, &c. Indeed,

[1] See *Easy Lessons on Christian Evidences*. Lesson III.

the fault I have been speaking of is of the very essence of a system of "pious frauds." Would that Protestants did not so readily flatter themselves, that their separation from the *Church* of Rome exempts them from all danger of errors like hers!

There is a strong temptation again to foster or connive at the popular error of expecting under the christian dispensation those temporal rewards and punishments which form no part of the system; a mistake which no doubt has often produced partial good results, and which there will often be, and oftener appear to be, danger in removing[1].

Of the same character is the belief that the moral precepts of the Levitical law are (on the authority of that Law) binding on Christians; and that the observance of the Lord's day is a duty to which they are bound by the fourth commandment[2]. Though the desired conclusions may in these and similar cases be reached by the paths of truth, there will be an apparent, and sometimes a real danger that those who have been long used to act rightly on erroneous principles, may fail of those conclusions, when undeceived. In such cases it requires a thorough love of truth, and a firm reliance on divine support, to adhere steadily to the straight course.

(3) A like danger will often be our appointed trial in the converse case also;—in firmly resolving to suppress no clearly-revealed gospel-truth, through apprehension of ill consequences. Then only can we be "pure from the blood of all men," if we "have not shunned to set before them *all* the counsel of God."

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[1] See Discourse on *National Blessings and Judgments.*

[2] Of course, I am not at present alluding to those who, after a full and candid examination, are themselves convinced of this;—whose sincere and deliberate belief is, that the fourth commandment does extend to Christians, but that it is sufficiently obeyed by the observance of the *first* day of the week instead of the seventh; or that the precise directions of an express command of Scripture, which is admitted to be binding on us, may allowably be altered by the traditions of the Church. Though I cannot but regard such views as erroneous, the error does not belong to the class now under discussion. See *Thoughts on the Sabbath.*

He did indeed, Himself, think fit to hide for many ages, under the veil of the Levitical Law, the coming of the Messiah's kingdom; and it is but a small part probably of the great scheme of redemption that He has as yet imparted to us; but He has not authorized *Man* to suppress any part of what He has revealed; and it is an impious presumption even to inquire into the expediency of such a procedure.

No dread to be entertained of the progress of science.

(4) Lastly, as we must not dare to withhold or disguise revealed *religious* truth, so, we must dread the progress of no *other* truth. We must not imitate the bigoted Hierarchy who imprisoned Galileo; and step forward, Bible in hand, (like the profane Israelites carrying the Ark of God into the field of battle) to check the inquiries of the Geologist, the Astronomer, or the Political-economist, from an apprehension that the cause of religion can be endangered by them[1]. Any theory on whatever subject, that is really sound, can never be inimical to a religion founded on truth; and any that is unsound may be refuted by arguments drawn from observation and experiment, without calling in the aid of revelation. If we give way to a dread of danger, from the inculcation of any scriptural doctrine, or from the progress of physical or moral science, we manifest a want of faith in God's power, or in his will, to maintain his own cause. That we shall indeed best further his cause by fearless perseverance in an open and straight course, I am firmly persuaded; but it is not only when we *perceive* the mischiefs of falsehood and disguise, and the beneficial tendency of fairness and candour, that we are to be followers of truth; the trial of our faith is, when we *cannot* perceive this: and the part of a lover of truth is to follow her at all seeming hazards, after the example of Him who "came into the world that He might bear witness to the Truth[2]."

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[1] See First Lecture on *Political Economy*.

[2] "He came to establish a Kingdom of Truth: that is, not a kingdom whose subjects should embrace on compulsion what is in itself true, and consequently

No one, in fact, is capable of fully appreciating the ultimate expediency of a devoted adherence to Truth in all that relates to the christian religion, except the divine Author of it; because He alone comprehends the whole of that vast and imperfectly-revealed scheme of Providence; and alone can see the inmost recesses of the human heart; and alone can foresee and judge of the remotest consequences of human actions. And much of the good policy of the course I have been recommending, which *can* be perceived by those of more cultivated minds, is beyond the comprehension of a great majority of mankind. The *expediency* of truth can be estimated by few; but its intrinsic loveliness, by all. None are precluded, by want of intellectual power and culture, from that undoubting faith and firm reliance on their great Master, which will lead them to aim at Truth out of veneration to Him;—to reject disguise, and sophistry, and equivocation, at once, as hateful to Him, without stopping to inquire what further evil they may lead to.

Human approbation not often bestowed

And it is no more than needful that those who act thus, *should* have a more than common assurance of his approbation; for they will often

should be adherents of truth by accident; but a kingdom whose subjects should have been admitted as such in consequence of their being 'of the truth;' that is, men honestly disposed to embrace and 'obey the truth,' whatever it might be, that God should reveal: agreeably to what our Lord has elsewhere declared, that 'if any man will do (θέλει, is willing to do) the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine,' &c.

"To any persons who are not 'of the truth,' in the above sense,—that is, who, though they believe (as every one does) many things that are true, yet have not heartily set themselves, with perfect candour and self-devotion, to ascertain as far as possible, and to obey at all hazards, God's truth,—to such persons, these views will of course be likely to appear strange and fanciful, perplexing, and perhaps offensive; and they will accordingly seek for some different interpretation.

"But when they explain Christ's declaration of his having 'come into the world to bear witness of the truth,' in some sense in itself intelligible, but quite unconnected with the inquiry He was answering, as to his being 'a King,' they forget that what He said must have had not only *some* meaning, but some meaning *pertinent* to the occasion: and this they seem as much at a loss for, as Pilate himself; who exclaimed, 'What is truth?' not from being ignorant of the meaning of the word, but from perceiving no connexion between 'truth' and the inquiry respecting the claim to regal office."—Essay I. on the *Kingdom of Christ*, § 9.

on the lover of truth.

fail of that of their fellow-men. Besides being occasionally censured as rash and mischievous, they will constantly find a want of sympathy in those (and they, I fear, are a majority) whose character is, in this point, opposite. They may be valued indeed by many persons for other good qualities; but that zealous thorough-going love of Truth which I have been describing, is very seldom admired, or liked, or indeed understood, except by those who possess it. Courage, liberality, activity, &c., are often highly prized by those who do not possess them in any great degree; but the quality I am speaking of, is, by those deficient in it, either not perceived where it exists, or perceived only as an excess and extravagance.

"There is nothing covered," however, "that shall not be revealed; nor hid, that shall not be known." And the genuine and fearless lover of truth, who has sought, not the praise of men, but the praise of God "who seeth in secret," shall be "sanctified through his Truth" here, and by Him "be rewarded openly" hereafter.

NOTE TO ESSAY I.

NOTE A, page 8.

SOMETHING may be inculcated at one time, and not at another, either from its being *true* at the one time and not at another, or again from its being *needful* to be set forth at one time and not at another. But this distinction, though obvious when stated, is, in practice, often overlooked.

For instance, from the omission in the Apostles' Creed of all mention of the Divinity of Christ, and of the Atonement, some have inferred that the doctrines were not, at the time that Creed was framed, *believed* as true. But the proper inference is, that they were omitted because they were not, at that time, *doubted*; the earliest heresies having had reference to quite different points. We should not expect to find in a Symbol any notice of Articles of faith hitherto uncontroverted. In later Symbols, the mention of these doctrines was called forth by the heresies which subsequently arose.

On the other hand, Christ's disclaimer of a temporal Kingdom was evidently *called forth* at that particular time by the circumstances of his trial before Pilate: but it would be monstrous to suppose that those circumstances would have induced Him to make a declaration that was not *true*;—to give a description of his Kingdom different from what really belonged to it, or from what He designed it to become. And yet many even of the early christian emperors were urged to put down idolatry and heresy by the civil sword[1]. Jesus had indeed forbidden his disciples to draw the sword in his cause, or to call down fire from heaven on those who rejected Him; and had declared his Kingdom to be "not of this world;" and his first followers had propagated his religion by gentle persuasion, "not rendering evil for evil," but "in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves:" but then, it was replied,

[1] "Not more than twenty years after Constantine's entire possession of the empire, Julius Firmicus Maternus calls upon the Emperors Constantius and Constans to extirpate the relics of the ancient religion; . . . . modicum tantum superest, ut legibus vestris . . . extincta idololatriæ pereat funesta contagio." — Paley's *Evidences*, Part II., chap. 9.

that such a procedure was suited only to the first beginnings of Christianity; that the earliest disciples had no power, when as yet magistrates and kings were not arrayed on their side[1], forcibly to suppress idolatry;—and that our Lord's language to Pilate, and his rejection of the attempts to make Him a king, had reference to the then prevailing expectations of a temporal Messiah. Now there was undoubtedly this expectation of an anointed Son of David, who should reign in bodily person over the Jews, and should bestow on his followers not only the spiritual blessings relating to a future state, but also, worldly power and splendour. And doubtless, his disclaimer had reference to these expectations: but the question is, was this the cause of Christ's kingdom actually *being* of such a character as He described it, or, merely of *his insisting* on this, in those particular expressions, and on those particular occasions? Are his rebukes to his disciples, for offering to call down fire from heaven, and to fight in his cause,—rebukes which were evidently called forth by their mistaken zeal on each occasion;—are these to be regarded as having reference to these occasions only, or as descriptive of the character of the religion universally[2]?

And what has been said of the employment of *force*, may equally be applied to the employment of *fraud*, in the cause of Christianity. Those who have practised pious frauds in the cause of Christianity, probably committed (unknown to themselves) a similar error to the one just mentioned, in their view of those passages of Scripture which insist on "truth" as a characteristic feature of the religion: those *expressions*, indeed, were probably called forth in many instances by the peculiar circumstances attending the first promulgation of the Gospel; but the character of the Gospel itself is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

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1 "Non invenitur exemplum in evangelicis et apostolicis literis, aliquid petitum a regibus terræ pro ecclesia, contra inimicos ecclesiæ: quis negat non inveniri? Sed nondum implebatur illa prophetia, et nunc reges intelligite, erudimini, qui judicatis terram; servite Domino in timore. Adhuc enim illud implebatur quod in eodem psalmo paullo superius dicitur; Quare fremuerunt gentes, et populi meditati sunt inania? &c."—Augustine, *Epist.* 93, chap. iii. § 9.

The remainder of the passage is curious, in which this Father goes on to represent the two opposite decrees of King Nebuchadnezzar, as types of the two conditions of the Church; the sentence of death passed on the three pious Jews who refused to worship the golden idol, being typical of the times of the Apostles and Martyrs; and the present time (Augustine's) being represented by the decree of the same king, that whosoever should "speak anything amiss against the God of those Jews, should be cut in pieces."

2 See Essay V. (Third Series) § 4.

ESSAY II.

ON THE DIFFICULTIES AND THE VALUE OF THE WRITINGS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL GENERALLY.

Paul more exposed than any of the Apostles to the attacks both of open enemies and false friends, —both personally, and in his writings.

§ 1 THERE appears to be a very remarkable analogy between the treatment to which Paul was himself exposed during his personal ministry on earth, and that which his works have met with since. In both he stands distinguished in many points among the preachers of the Gospel: and it is possible that this distinction may in some way be connected with the peculiar manner in which he became one of that number.

The same Apostle, who had been originally so bitter a persecutor of the Christians, was exposed, after his conversion, to a greater variety of afflictions in the gospel-cause than any of the others. He not only had to endure a greater amount of persecution than any of the rest, from unbelievers, but was also peculiarly harassed by vexatious opposition, and mortifications of every kind from his christian brethren. He was not only "in labours more abundant,"—he not only endured a double portion of imprisonments, scourgings, stoning, perils of every kind from the enemies of the Gospel, being specially hated by the Jews on account of his being the Apostle of the Gentiles,—the overthrower of the proud distinctions of Israel "after the flesh;"—but he was also troubled by the perversity of his own converts; especially such of them as were corrupted by false teachers, who endeavoured to bring them into subjection to the Mosaic law, and laboured to undervalue his claims

as a true Apostle, and to rival him in the estimation of his own churches.

It is not unlikely that his Lord *designed* thus to place him foremost in the fight,—thus to assign to him, both the most hazardous, and also the most harassing and distressing offices in the christian ministry,—on account of his having once been a blasphemer and persecutor. Not as a punishment, — or again that he might atone and make compensation for his former sin (which no man can do); but that he might have an opportunity of completely retracing his steps, and of feeling that he did so;—that he might display a zeal, and firmness, and patience, and perseverance, above all the rest, in the cause which he had once oppressed; that by having his own injurious treatment of Christians continually brought to his mind by what he himself endured, he might the more deeply and deliberately humble himself before God for it;—that he might find room to exercise, in his dealings with unbelievers, all that full knowledge of the perverse prejudices of the human mind, with which his own memory would furnish him, by reflecting on his own case; and finally, that both he and the other Apostles might feel that he was placed fully on a level with them, notwithstanding his former opposition to the cause; by enduring and accomplishing in it more than all the rest,—by suffering more than he had ever inflicted,—by forwarding the cause of Truth more than he had ever hindered it,—and by bearing with him this pledge that God had fully pardoned him—the pledge of his being counted worthy not only to suffer in his Master's cause, but to suffer more than any other, and with greater effect. He who had been accessory to the stoning of Stephen, himself, alone of the Apostles, as far as we know, suffered stoning; he who had been so zealous in behalf of the law of Moses, was destined to encounter not only unbelieving Jews, but those Christians also who laboured to corrupt Christianity by mixing the law of Moses with it; he who had been, as he expresses it, "exceedingly mad against the disciples, and persecuted them even

unto strange cities," was himself driven from city to city by enemies whose fury knew no bounds, both of his own countrymen, and of the senseless rabble of idolaters, who assailed him like "wild beasts, at Ephesus." He who had misinterpreted the ancient prophecies respecting the Messiah, and despised his disciples, had to endure not only the contradiction and derision of unbelievers, but also the wilfulness and perversity of "false brethren," who misrepresented and distorted the doctrines he himself taught, and of arrogant rivals who strove to bring him into disrepute with those who had learnt the faith from him[1].

In all these struggles he was "more than conqueror, through Christ that strengthened" him. Trusting that his Master would enable him to go through the work to which he had been appointed, and would turn even the malice and perversity of men to "the furtherance of the Gospel," he "rejoiced that Christ was preached," even when it was "through envy and

[1] "Here then we have a man of liberal attainments, and in other points of sound judgment, who had addicted his life to the service of the gospel. We see him, in the prosecution of his purpose, travelling from country to country, enduring every species of hardship, encountering every extremity of danger, assaulted by the populace, punished by the magistrates, scourged, beat, stoned, left for dead; expecting, wherever he came, a renewal of the same treatment, and the same dangers, yet, when driven from one city, preaching in the next; spending his whole time in the employment, sacrificing to it his pleasures, his ease, his safety: persisting in this course to old age, unaltered by the experience of perverseness, ingratitude, prejudice, desertion; unsubdued by anxiety, want, labour, persecutions; unwearied by long confinement, undismayed by the prospect of death. Such was St. Paul. We have his letters in our hands; we have also a history purporting to be written by one of his fellow-travellers, and appearing, by a comparison with these letters, certainly to have been written by some person well acquainted with the transactions of his life." . . . . . "We also find him positively, and in appropriated terms, asserting that he himself worked miracles, strictly and properly so called, in support of the mission which he executed; the history, meanwhile, recording various passages of his ministry, which come up to the extent of this assertion. The question is, whether falsehood was ever attested by evidence like this. Falsehoods, we know, have found their way into reports, into tradition, into books; but is an example to be met with, of a man voluntarily undertaking a life of want and pain, of incessant fatigue, of continual peril; submitting to the loss of his home and country, to stripes and stoning, to tedious imprisonment, and the constant expectation of a violent death, for the sake of carrying about a story of what was false, and of what, if false, he must have known to be so?"—Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, pp. 338, 339.

strife," by those "who thought to add affliction" to the Apostle's bonds; he exulted in that very bondage, because it was made the means of introducing him to the notice of some among the Romans to whom he might not otherwise have gained access (Phil. i. 12—18); and at Philippi, when cruelly scourged and imprisoned untried, by the Roman magistrates, he joyfully trusted that Christ would make even this a means of forwarding his cause; which was done in the consequent conversion of the jailor and his family; the germ, probably, in conjunction with the household of Lydia, of the exemplary church of the Philippians[1].

A like fate seems to attend the writings also which this blessed apostle and martyr left behind him. No part of the Scriptures of the New Testament has been so unjustly neglected by some Christians, and so much perverted by others; over and above the especial hatred of them by infidels and by some descriptions of heretics. Still may Paul be said to stand, in his works, as he did in person while on earth, in the front of the battle; to bear the chief brunt of assailants from the enemies' side, and to be treacherously stabbed by false friends on his own; degraded and vilified by one class of heretics, perverted and misinterpreted by another, and too often most unduly neglected by those who are regarded as orthodox. And still do his works stand, and

[1] The whole narrative of this transaction is particularly affecting from the *strong relief* in which the incidents are set, by the quiet simplicity of the language: "The magistrates rent off their clothes and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely; who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison-doors open, he drew his sword and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"—Acts xvi. 22—30.

will ever stand, as a mighty bulwark of the true christian faith. He, after having himself "fought the good fight, and finished his course," has left behind him a monument in his works, whereby "he being dead yet speaketh;" a monument which his Master will guard (even till that day when its author shall receive the "crown of righteousness laid up for him") from being overthrown by the assaults of enemies, and from moulder-ing into decay through the negligence of friends.

Ambiguity of the word Gospel.

§. 2 In order to avoid being misunderstood as to the sense in which this Apostle's writings have been spoken of as a principal bulwark of gospel-truth, and as to the censure passed on the comparative neglect they sometimes meet with, I must entreat the reader's attention to some considerations, which, though frequently overlooked in practice, are so obvious when once fairly pre-sented to the mind, that I fear it may be thought trifling to dwell on them.

Of all the ambiguities of language that have ever confused men's thoughts, and thence led to pernicious results in prac-tice, (and unspeakable is the mischief which has thus been done,) there are few, perhaps, that have ever produced more evil than the ambiguity of the word "Gospel." The word, as is well known, signifies, according to its etymology (as well as the Greek term of which it is a translation), "good tidings;" and thence is applied especially to the joyful intelligence of salvation for fallen Man through Christ. The same term has come to be applied, naturally enough, to each of the Histories which give an account of the life of Him, the Author of that salvation; and thence men are frequently led to seek exclu-sively, or principally, in those histories, for an account of the *doctrines* of the christian religion: for where should they look, they may say, for "*Gospel*-truth," but in the "*Gospels?*" And yet it is plain, on a moment's reflection, that whether they are right or wrong in such a practice, this *reason* for it is no more than a play upon words: for no one really supposes

that when the Apostles went forth to preach the Gospel, the meaning of that is, that they recited the histories composed by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which were not written till long after; or even that their teaching was confined to the mere narrative of the things there recorded.

Full instruction in the christian scheme not to be found in the four Evangelists; but in the Apostolic Epistles, especially Paul's.

In the primary sense of the word Gospel,—the "good-tidings of great joy to all people," which were first proclaimed [preached] by the heavenly Messengers to the shepherds, and afterwards by Jesus and his disciples,—in this sense, the writings of the Evangelists do contain nearly the whole of the Gospel; and (as has been just remarked) derived from this their title. Ours is an *historical* religion; not merely connected with, but *founded* on, certain recorded *events*;—the Birth, Life, Death, and Resurrection of the Saviour;—the pouring out of his Spirit on the disciples, &c. Strictly speaking, therefore, the Gospel is the annunciation of what God has done for Man. What *Man* is to do on his part,—the *means* towards the end,—the christian faith and practice by which he must attain to a share of the proffered blessings,—these are properly Gospel-*doctrine*; but by a natural transition have come to be frequently called, simply, the *Gospel*. It is not necessary however to be curious about words any further than is necessary to secure us against being misled by them in respect of things. I am indifferent whether the Apostolic Epistles are called a part of the Gospel, or not, provided it be but admitted and carefully kept in mind, that they are necessary to direct us how to attain the blessings of the Gospel. An announcement of the existence, and of the miraculous efficacy of a Tree of Life, would be of no benefit to those who were not instructed how to procure and partake of its fruit.

But there is yet another and less obvious ambiguity in the same word: our Lord, while on earth, was employed, together with his disciples, we are told, in preaching "the Gospel of the Kingdom;" *i.e.* the good tidings that "the kingdom of

heaven (as He himself expressed it) was *at hand.*" And good tidings these certainly were, to the Jews and others who looked for the Messiah's promised kingdom, (to whom alone he preached) that this kingdom was just about to be established. And since, therefore, Jesus is spoken of as preaching the *Gospel*, many are hence led to look *to his discourses* alone, or principally, as the storehouse of divine truth, to the neglect of the other Sacred Writings. But the Gospel which Jesus Himself preached, was not the same thing with the *Gospel* which He sent forth his Apostles to preach after his resurrection. This may at the first glance appear a paradox; but on a moment's consideration it will seem rather a truism, that the preaching of Jesus and that of the Apostles, was not, and could not be, the same; though they were, each the Gospel. I do not mean, of course, that they were two different systems; much less, at variance with each other; but the one was a part only, and the other a whole; or rather I should say, a *greater* part of that stupendous whole which is not to be entirely revealed to us here on earth,—the stupendous mystery of Man's redemption.

How, indeed, could our Lord, during his abode on earth, preach fully that scheme of salvation, of which the keystone had not been laid,—even his meritorious sacrifice as an atonement for sin,—his resurrection from the dead,—and ascension into glory,—when these events had not taken place? He did indeed darkly hint at these events, in his discourses to his disciples (and to them alone) by way of prophecy; but we are told that "the saying was hid from them, and they comprehended it not, till after that Christ was risen from the dead." Of course, therefore, there was no reason, and no room, for Him to enter into a full discussion of the doctrines dependent on those events. He left them to be enlightened in due time as to the true nature of his kingdom by the gift which He kept in store for them: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all [the] truth."

There would have been no need of this promise, had our Lord's own discourses contained a full account of the christian faith.

But "the Gospel of the Kingdom" which He preached was, that the "kingdom of Heaven was *at hand*," not that it was actually established; which *was* the Gospel preached by his Apostles, when Christ, "having been made perfect through sufferings," had entered into his kingdom,—had "ascended up on high, and led captive" the oppressor of men, and had "received gifts" to bestow on them. Our Lord's discourses, therefore, while on earth, though they teach, of course, the truth, do not teach, nor could have been meant to teach, the *whole* truth, as afterwards revealed to his disciples. They could not, indeed, even consistently with truth, have contained the main part of what the Apostles preached; because that was chiefly founded on events which had not then taken place.

What chance then can they have of attaining true christian knowledge, who shut their eyes to such obvious conclusions as these? who, under that idle plea, the misapplication of the maxim, that "the disciple is not above his master," confine their attention entirely to the discourses of Christ recorded in the Four Gospels, as containing all necessary truth; and if any thing in the other parts of the Sacred Writings is forced upon their attention, studiously explain it away, and limit its signification at all hazards, so that it may not go one step beyond what is clearly revealed in the works of the Evangelists? as if a man should, in the culture of a fruit-tree, carefully destroy and reject as a spurious excrescence, every part of the fruit which was not fully developed in the blossom that preceded it.

Even if Christ had in person publicly preached after his resurrection, as well as his Apostles, this plea, that "the disciple is not above his master," would not have excused the insult offered to Him in the person of his messengers: the insult, I mean, of making the authority He gave them go for just nothing at all; which it does, if they are to be believed, just as far as they coincide with what He himself uttered in

person, and no further; since, thus far, any one of *us* is to be believed. For, the Apostles, who were divinely commissioned by Christ Himself, either were inspired by Him with his Spirit, which "led them into all [the] truth[1]," or they were *not*: if we say that they were not, we make Him a liar, for giving them this commission and this promise, as well as them, for preaching what they did: if they *were* thus divinely authorized, it must follow inevitably that what they said (I mean in the teaching of the christian religion) was said by *Him*, and has exactly the same authority as if He had uttered it with his own lips. Even an earthly king expects that a messenger, sent by him with satisfactory credentials and full powers, should receive the same credit for what he says as would be given to himself in person; and would regard it as an unpardonable affront if the message so sent were rejected. "He that heareth you" (said Christ to his Apostles) "heareth me; and he that *despiseth you, despiseth me*: and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me."

But in truth, not only is the preaching of the Apostles to be regarded as of divine authority, and therefore not *requiring* confirmation from our Lord's personal discourses, nor submitting to *limitation* by them, but from the very nature of the case, it is *impossible* that such a complete coincidence should exist between them. I have just above supposed the case of Jesus himself preaching publicly after his resurrection, conjointly with his disciples; but we know that He did *not* do this: He sent them forth to testify of events, and to teach doctrines founded on events, which had not taken place during his personal ministry on earth. It is commonly supposed indeed by ignorant Christians (ignorant, I mean, of what they might

[1] They were not inspired with a knowledge of *all truth*; being in many things left to act on their own judgment; as they expressly tell us. But what they were inspired with was (as the Greek plainly intimates) "the knowledge of all *the* truth;" viz. that truth which they were commissioned to make known;—the mysteries of the christian religion, in which Paul declares expressly he was instructed by the Lord Himself.

learn from the Bible), that Jesus Christ came into the world to teach a true religion: but in fact, He came, chiefly, for a different purpose. He did not come to *make* a revelation, so much as to be the *subject* of a revelation. He was only so far the revealer and teacher of the great doctrines of Christianity, as you might call the sun and planets the discoverers of the Newtonian System of Astronomy. He *accomplished* what He left his *Apostles* to testify and to explain; He offered up Himself on the cross, that *they* might teach the atoning virtue of his sacrifice; He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, that they might declare the great mystery of his divine and human nature, and preach that faith in Him by which his followers hope to be raised and to reign with Him.

The christian faith is not merely to believe what Christ *taught*, but to believe *in Him*. As the promised Messiah, a man might believe in Him while He was on earth; but *what* the Messiah should be, and that He should be a Redeemer by his *death*, no one did or could understand, till that great work was accomplished. The true character of the redemption, and of the faith by which we must partake of it, and all the circumstances of the Messiah's spiritual kingdom (a kingdom which did not exist during his ministry on earth) his Apostles themselves could not collect, even after his departure, from all his former discourses, till they had received inspiration from on high, to enable them to teach the true doctrines of the Gospel. And when they *did* understand this Gospel, they thought it necessary to give an *explanation* of it in their discourses and in their epistles. Those, therefore, who neglect their inspired preaching, and will learn nothing of Christianity except what they find in the discourses of Jesus, confident that these alone contain the whole truth, are wilfully preferring an imperfect to a more complete revelation, and setting their own judgment above that of the Apostles. It is frightful to think how much they stake on this their supposed superiority; —what consequences of their blind presumption they may have to abide; "professing themselves to be wise they become fools;"

and as they despise the teaching of the Holy Ghost who led the Apostles "into all Truth," is it not to be feared that if they persist in this their rejection of Him, He will give them over to their own vain conceits; and leave those who have turned aside from the "living waters of the Spirit," to "hew out for themselves broken cisterns that will hold no water?"

The books, then, which we call the four Gospels, do not, it should always be remembered, contain a compendium of the christian Religion, but, chiefly, memoirs of the life and preparatory teaching of its Founder: who came into the world not to make a revelation, so much as to be the subject of a revelation;—to announce the glad tidings (gospel) of salvation through Him, but not to give any full description of the *means* by which *we* are to embrace that salvation; and who, at the close of his personal ministry, tells his disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them *now*."

Nor do the Evangelists undertake the task of teaching the christian Faith; since they wrote for the express use, not of unbelieving Jews and idolaters, but of Christians, who had heard the gospel doctrines preached, and then had been regularly instructed (catechised, as the word is in the original) and examined, and, finally, baptized into the faith. Christianity was not (as many are apt to suppose) founded on the Four Gospels, but, on the contrary, the Four Gospels were founded on Christianity; *i.e.* they were written to meet the demand of Christians, who were naturally anxious for something of a regular account of the principal events from which their faith was derived. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order, a declaration of those things which are *most certainly believed* among us .... it seemed good to me also to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou *hast been instructed*."

The book of the Acts of the Apostles, again, contains a history of the progress, but no detail of the teaching, of

Christianity. Many of the discourses mentioned as having been delivered, are not themselves recorded: the object and design of the work being (as in the case of the Four Gospels) not to teach Christianity to its readers, who were already Christians, but to give them a history of its propagation[1].

Our chief source, therefore, of instruction, as to the doctrines of the Gospel, must be in the Apostolic Epistles; which cannot, indeed, be expected to afford a *regular* systematic introduction to Christianity,—an orderly detail of the first rudiments of the Faith, calculated for the instruction of beginners entirely ignorant of it, since all of them were written to those who were already converts to Christianity; but yet, from the variety of the occasions on which they were composed, and of the persons to whom they were addressed, and from their being purposely designed to convey admonition, instruction, and exhortation as to christian doctrine and practice, (which is not the case with any other part of the Sacred Writings,) the Apostolic Epistles do contain, though scattered irregularly here and there, according to the several occasions, all the great doctrines of the Gospel, as far as it has yet been revealed to men; explained, enforced, repeated, illustrated, in an infinite variety of forms of expression; thus furnishing us with the means, by a careful study of those precious remains, and by a diligent comparison of one passage with another, of attaining sufficient knowledge of all necessary truth, and of becoming "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus[2]."

The most precious part of this treasure we have from the pen of the Apostle Paul; he being the author of the far greater part of the Epistles, (about five-sixths of the whole,) and also furnishing even a greater variety still of instruction

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[1] See Hinds's *History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity*. Part II. chap 2.

[2] To the Scriptures therefore was assigned the office of *proving*, but to the *Church*, that of systematically *teaching*, the christian doctrines. [See Dr Hawkins's excellent little work on *Tradition*.] This circumstance seems to me to afford a powerful evidence of Christianity. See Essay VI. (First Series.)

than in proportion to this amount, on account of the variety of the times, and circumstances, and occasions, which produced them, and of the persons to whom they were written:—individuals and entire churches; Jews and Gentiles; converts of his own making, and strangers to his person; European or Asiatic; sound and zealous Christians; and the negligent and misguided. The same faith is taught to all; the same duties enforced on all; but various points of faith and of practice are dwelt on in each, according to the several occasions. This very thing, however,—the variety of the circumstances, the temporary and local allusions, and, in short, the thorough, earnest, business-like style of his letters,—cannot but increase the difficulty, in some places, of ascertaining the writer's meaning; and those who are too indolent to give themselves any trouble on the subject, shelter themselves under the remark of the Apostle Peter, that the Epistles of Paul contain "things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned wrest to their own destruction:" unlearned, *i.e.* not in systems of human philosophy, but in the truths revealed in the Bible. No doubt his writings *do* contain "things hard to be understood;" but that is a reason why Christians should take the more pains to understand them, and why those who are commissioned by the chief Shepherd for that purpose, should the more diligently explain them to their flocks.

Nay, but his doctrines, it seems, are not only *difficult*, but *dangerous* also, and, therefore, had better be kept out of sight, lest the unlearned should not only fail to understand them, but should "wrest them to their own destruction." Then let us throw aside the whole Bible at once, and invent a safe religion of our own. For hear but Peter's words:—"which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do *also the other Scriptures*, to their own destruction." So that if this inference is to be drawn at all, from the danger to the unlearned of wresting doctrines to their own destruction;—if to avoid the danger of misinterpretation, we are to seal up the book which contains them, the book so sealed up must be the Bible.

Danger of misinterpretation not to deter us from the study of Paul's epistles.

Dangerous indeed! yes; most good things are dangerous; and the more, in proportion to their excellence; to those "who are unlearned, and unstable;" *i.e.* who will not learn how to use them aright, and who are unstable,—unsteady in giving their attention to gain right knowledge, and to apply it in practice. Meat and drink are dangerous; for what multitudes fall a sacrifice to intemperance! Shall we then resolve to perish with famine, and let our children starve around us, lest we and they should thus wrest to our destruction the good gifts of God? Shall the pastors, who are commissioned to feed Christ's flock, shut them out from the principal pasture designed for their use, lest they should stray beyond its bounds, or come to some harm there? What are christian ministers appointed for, but to instruct the people in the Scriptures,—to explain to them those Scriptures,—and to warn them against the errors arising from the wresting and perverting of God's Word? Ill would they perform their office should they dare to mutilate God's Word by leaving out every thing that is "hard to be understood," to save themselves the trouble of interpreting it;—should they seek to preserve their hearers from the danger attendant on the Gospel truths, by omitting to "declare to them *all* the counsel of God."

And, after all, no such security as is sought can ever be found. Where there is true coin, there will always be counterfeit in circulation:—there is no truth in the world that has not some error very much resembling it: there is no virtue but there is a corresponding vice that apes its appearance: there is no right principle, in Scripture or anywhere else, that may not by the unlearned be "wrested to their own destruction." Some *will* do this with the truths of Scripture, in spite of all our care; but there is this difference; that he who studies and leads others to study the whole Word of God, as his inspired servants have left it, has at least good reason to hope, that he and they *may*, through God's Spirit, attain truth without error; whereas he who confines himself to a part of the Scrip-

tures, and that too a part which (it is plain from what has been just said) *cannot* contain the whole truth of the Gospel, and who wilfully disregards the teaching of him whose "Gospel was not after man, neither received of man, nor taught, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ;"—such an one is *sure* to be wrong, and to lead others wrong if they are guided by him: and he is fully answerable both for his own errors and for theirs: he makes the experiment at his own peril; and on his own head must be the inevitable consequence of rejecting an acknowledged revelation of Jesus Christ[1].

And he must also bear the blame even of the errors into which *others* may lead his hearers. If they chance to listen to some wild antinomian fanatic, who cites perpetually texts from Paul, which they have never heard differently explained, how can it be expected that they should perceive and avoid the error? They know that Paul's writings are admitted as canonical and inspired; and they have not been taught that his language will bear any other interpretation than what they hear given; and the silence of their own pastor on the subject will have afforded them a presumption that he can suggest no other interpretation. And thus the wolf will scatter and devour the flock which their shepherd has forsaken.

It is not, however, on the *dangers* to be apprehended from such a procedure, and the *expediency* of an opposite course, that I wish principally to dwell. I would rather advert to the principles laid down in the preceding Essay. Supposing we were in any case quite sure[2] that no fanatical sectaries would arise to take advantage of our omission or neglect of this Apostle's writings, should we then be justified in thus guard-

[1] Lest I should seem to have been combating a shadow, it may be as well to mention that the Discourse of which this Essay continues the substance, was called forth by the advice given, at that time, to Divinity-students by persons high in office at Oxford, to abstain from the study of Paul's Epistles till they should have thoroughly mastered such and such books; a list which would occupy at least ten years of hard study. But they were to be allowed to take Holy Orders in the mean time, and to act as instructors of whole congregations!

[2] This is the remark, almost verbatim, of the late Bishop Copleston, in a conversation with the author, on the subject of the present Essay.

ing against apprehended evils by keeping out of sight the instructions he was commissioned by his Master to deliver?—in taking such liberties with the Gospel as to modify and fashion it according to our views, and virtually to expunge from the record of God's revelations what we chance to think unnecessary? Have we a right, in short, even to entertain the question concerning expediency, instead of considering simply what is the *Truth* as declared by divine inspiration, and resolving, at all events, to follow the truth?

Study of Paul's writings not to be deferred till a mass of theological learning has been acquired from other sources.

§ 3 It is necessary to observe, however, that there is a way of evading the force of all that has been hitherto urged:—a plan which certainly may be, and I fear in some instances has been, resorted to, for nullifying in effect, without professing to oppose, every argument that has been adduced. And it is this: to extol Paul's writings, and exhort men to the diligent study of them; urging at the same time (what no one can deny) the importance of interpreting them rightly; and insisting on a preliminary course of study, without which no one is even to enter on the perusal of them; and then to make this preparation consist in a thorough acquaintance with such a list of books, as even those professionally devoted to theological pursuits cannot be expected to master without the assiduous labour of several years[1]. No plan could be devised more effectual (were it generally adopted) for making Paul's Epistles a sealed book to all but about one in ten thousand of the christian world. For supposing even all the Clergy, nay, even all candidates for Ordination, to have gone through this preparatory course of study, the same could not be expected of the laity, except a small portion of the educated classes. And the benefits, whatever they might be, of this

[1] I was once urged to pledge myself not to examine candidates for Deacon's Orders in the original of the Apostolic Epistles. I inquired, in reply, whether Deacons were to be allowed to *expound* those Epistles to the congregations in their preaching.

preparation, would, after all, be confined to those few who had gone through it. They, indeed, if they were careful not even to open these Epistles till their minds were sufficiently biassed by a great mass of human commentaries and disquisitions, would doubtless be prepared to understand them very differently from what they would have done on another system; (whether better or worse is not now the question;) but they would not after all be qualified to expound this writer to their flocks, nor authorized to recommend the perusal of him; for these would be, by the hypothesis, unfit to enter on the study of his Epistles, or to comprehend any exposition of them. And if the principle were consistently followed up, it would soon be remarked that the mass of unlearned Christians are not duly prepared for the thorough comprehension even of *the rest* of Scripture; so that we should speedily arrive at the very point so earnestly contended for against the Reformers; viz. the inexpediency of putting the Bible into the hands of the People, and the necessity of leaving them to be instructed by their pastors in whatever things these should judge most profitable for them, and level to their capacities.

If these principles be correct, then, it is false to say that the christian Religion was designed, or at least is *adapted*, to be that of the mass of mankind. Some, who say that it is so, (while they ridicule the idea of instructing the lower orders in the Evidences, and in the peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel,) mean no more than this; that it is possible for a clown to *practise* honesty, temperance, and other virtues which Christianity inculcates. But it would be thought strange to attribute an acquaintance with *mechanics* to savages, and to brutes, on the ground that they employ the lever,—keep the centre of gravity in the right situation, and accommodate their movements to mechanical principles, of which principles they know nothing. If Christianity were designed for the People, it must have been designed that their *motives* should be christian faith and christian hope, and that they should be able "to give a reason of the hope that is in them."

Am I then contending, or did the Reformers mean to contend, that either Paul's Epistles, or the rest of the Scriptures, can be as well understood by a clown or a child as by the most learned theologian? Surely not. The highest abilities improved by the most laborious study, are not more than sufficient for the full comprehension of the Sacred Books; but, if on this ground they are not to be opened by any who are not so qualified, who will ever *become* thus qualified? If a number of books be pointed out, without a knowledge of which the Apostolic Epistles cannot be fully understood, it may probably be added with equal truth, that these books cannot be rightly understood without a knowledge of those Epistles. If we are to begin at all, we must begin somewhere; and we must, of course, begin in imperfection. Else, it might be said, that since veteran soldiers are alone well fitted to perform their part, therefore none but veterans should be brought into the field. The obvious and honest way of proceeding is, not to postpone altogether the study of any part of Scripture till we are qualified for the full comprehension of it; (which, on such a plan, we never should be, since our minds would be pre-occupied with human expositions) but to study both the Scriptures, and the best helps towards their explanation we can obtain, simultaneously; at the same time carefully guarding ourselves against arrogantly supposing that we do perfectly understand any thing at the first glance. It is to this arrogant disposition that the Scriptures are dangerous. "A little learning," is the utmost that the generality can attain;—it is what *all* must attain before they can arrive at great learning;—it is the utmost acquisition of those who know the most, in comparison of what they do *not* know. "A little learning" is then only (and then always) "a dangerous thing," when we overrate it, and are not aware of its littleness.

On the sources of some of the principal errors which have sprung from the misinterpretation of this Apostle's writings, and the means of guarding even ordinary Christians against

them, I propose to offer some more particular remarks in some of the following Essays.

For all that has been here urged I should be glad to think that there is little occasion. To offer proofs of the existence of the error in question,—such proofs as *might* be offered, is what could not be done with propriety. Some of my readers may, perhaps, regard me as combating a shadow, from having themselves never met with that depreciation of Paul's Epistles, which I have been deprecating. I have only to hope, they never may: but I fear that on inquiry they will find it but too prevalent;—that they will even meet with some who have gone the length of proposing that no part of the Scriptures should be printed for circulation among the mass of the people, except the Four Gospels: on the ground that *they* contain all things needful, and that the "things hard to be understood" in the Epistles would serve only to perplex and mislead them. A man who gives utterance to such an opinion, we may be sure, entertains it; but how can we be sure that all those who do *not* give it utterance are strangers to it?

Paul's writings dreaded chiefly from the unacceptableness of some of his doctrines.

§ 4 There is good reason, however, to believe that the chief objection to Paul's writings is not from the things *hard* to be understood which they contain, but from the things *easy* to be understood;—the doctrines so *plainly* taught by him, that "by grace we are saved,"—"that the *wages* of sin is death,"—"but eternal life is the *gift* of God through Jesus Christ;"—that our most perfect righteousness can never entitle us to claim reward at the hands of God, nor our own unaided strength enable us to practise that righteousness; but that the meritorious sacrifice of Christ is the only foundation of the Christian's hope, and the aid of his Spirit the only support of the Christian's virtue. These are doctrines humbling to the pride of the human heart, and unacceptable to the natural man; and *there-*

fore they are rejected by many, as leading to immoral life, and as favouring the notion that we may "continue in sin that grace may abound;" though the moral precepts of this very Apostle in every page, and his enforcement of a conformity to them, as indispensable to the Christian's acceptance with God, fly in the face of every one who dares thus to wrest these Scriptures to his own destruction.

The vehemence with which his works have been decried, a proof of their importance.

But the dislike shewn to the Apostle's writings by those, who on these grounds decry him, is a proof, if *he* was *inspired*, and *they* uninspired, not that *he* is wrong, but that *they* are[1]. If the Gospel is against a man, he will be against the Gospel. And the more any work is depreciated by those who are resolved to believe only just what they please, the higher ought its value to rise in the estimation of those who are willing to "obey the truth." Now there is no one of the Sacred Writers whose expressions have been so tortured, whose authority has been so much set at nought, as Paul's, by those who reject many of the most characteristic doctrines of the Gospel; which is a plain proof that they find him a formidable opponent[2]; and which should lead those who prize the purity of the Gospel, to value his writings the more. I am far from insinuating that the great truths of Christianity, —the doctrines of the divinity of our blessed Lord,—of his atoning sacrifice,—and of salvation through Him,—rest on this Apostle's authority alone; but a presumption is afforded, by the very hostility shewn towards him by the opponents of those doctrines, that he is particularly full and clear in enforcing them, and that he adds great confirmation to the testimony in their favour of the other Sacred Writers.

It is perhaps to be wished, accordingly, that those who without professing to reject Christianity, have avowedly

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[1] See Gal. i. 11, 12, and 2 Cor. xii. 7—12.

[2] The Mahometans, who acknowledge the authority of the four Gospels, (though they pretend the Christians have interpolated them,) hold the name of Paul in detestation.

laboured to disparage this Apostle, and to represent him as at variance with his Master, had written with more ability, and had attracted more notice; in order that they might have directed men's attention more strongly, not only to Paul's claims to a divine commission, but also to his importance as a bulwark of the christian faith[1]. And I wish also that some of them had set forth more strongly the alleged discrepancy between Paul's doctrines and those of the discourses of Jesus. This certainly might have been done; since (as was above remarked), though there is nothing *contrary* in the one to the other, there *is* much that is *different*, as the nature of the case required; the same doctrines which were but obscurely hinted at by the one, being fully developed, (the fit time being come,) and earnestly dwelt on, by the other. The doctrines which Jesus preached were suited to the period when the Kingdom of Heaven was only *at hand*, and were preparatory to the fuller manifestation of Gospel-truth which He revealed to the Apostle Paul, when his Kingdom was *established*.

The attention which a powerful opponent would thus have called to a most important subject, too often neglected by the advocates of our faith, and the light which would in consequence have been thrown on the subject, would have been no small benefit to the cause of truth. Opposition excites discussion; and discussion leads to inquiries which may end in not only bringing truth to light, but impressing it forcibly on minds which had been sunk in heedless apathy. Next, after an able, and full, and interesting vindication and explanation of Paul's writings, the sort of work whose appearance ought most to be hailed, is a plausible attack on them: which, indeed, is the most likely to call forth the other. His labours can never be effectually frustrated except by being kept out of sight. Whatever brings him into notice will, ultimately, bring him into triumph. All the malignity and the sophistry

[1] At the time when this was written, a work had recently appeared, entitled, *Not Paul but Jesus*, which attracted some little attention, but was soon forgotten.

of his adversaries will not only assail him in vain, but will lead in the end to the perfecting of his glory, and the extension of his Gospel. They may scourge him uncondemned, like the Roman magistrates at Philippi;—they may inflict on him the lashes of calumnious censure,—but they cannot silence him: they may thrust him as it were into a dungeon, and fetter him with their strained interpretations; but his voice will be raised even at the midnight of un-christian darkness, and will be heard effectually; his prison-doors will burst open as with an earthquake, and the fetters will fall from his hands; and even strangers to Gospel-truth will fall down at the feet of him, even Paul, to make that momentous inquiry, "What shall I do to be saved?"

May God "grant (as the prayer of our Church expresses it) that as the light of the Gospel has been caused to shine through the preaching of that blessed Apostle, we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may shew forth our thankfulness for the same, by following the holy doctrines which he taught, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

ESSAY III.

ON ELECTION.

Importance of explaining those parts of Scripture especially, from which dangerous consequences have been drawn.

We learn, from the most undeniable authority, that the writings of the blessed Apostle Paul contain some "things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as well as the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." Now as it is evidently of the highest importance to guard against such a danger, so it is not less evident (as has been formerly remarked) that this is not to be done by keeping in the background these Epistles, and withdrawing, or encouraging Christians to withhold, attention from them; not only because it is neither wise nor pious to neglect the instructions of one who "received not his doctrine from men, but by inspiration of Jesus Christ;" but also, because the very errors in question will be the more easily propagated by such as appeal to him in support of them, in proportion as they are allowed to make this appeal uncontradicted; if, while we admit the divine authority of these works, we leave them chiefly in the hands of extravagant fanatics, to put their own interpretation on passages, of which their hearers shall have been taught no better explanation. The christian instruction, in short, to be derived from a right interpretation of this Apostle's works, and the mischief resulting from a misinterpretation of them, furnish, each, a most powerful reason for the attentive study of them.

I propose, accordingly, to suggest some principles which should be kept in mind by one who would rightly understand this portion of Scripture; principles, the neglect of which has

given occasion to most of the errors into which "the unlearned and unstable" have fallen.

In order to understand the Apostle Paul aright, we should be acquainted with his character and situation, and with that of his hearers.

§ 1 It is evident that, in order to understand any author thoroughly, it is highly desirable, if not indispensable, to be acquainted, in some degree, with his character; the circumstances in which he was placed; and his habitual modes of thought thence resulting. Nor will this be sufficient, unless we have something of the same knowledge respecting the persons *to whom* he wrote. And the more remote any work is, in point of time or of place, from ourselves, the more diligent attention will be required in the reader, not only to ascertain these circumstances, but to keep them steadily and constantly in view. Many things have an *obvious* reference to particular persons, times, and places, and cannot be at all understood without taking these into consideration. When Moses, for instance, or the other sacred writers, speak of places "beyond Jordan," or "on this side of Jordan," every one perceives the necessity of considering the local situation of the author; but many other circumstances, not at all less essential to the right understanding of what is said, are apt to escape the notice of one whose attention is not steadily directed to the application of the principle laid down.

Now no one is ignorant that Paul was not only a Jew, but one strictly educated in the principles of the most learned and most rigid sect among the Jews; but this circumstance is not always practically kept in mind so much as it ought to be. No one who reads his works ought to lose sight of it for a moment, but constantly to bear in mind what habits of thought and modes of expression would be natural to a Jew, and to a Jew of that description.

Inspired, indeed, he was, with the knowledge of the Gospel; Jewish *errors* and *prejudices* were corrected in him by the Spirit of Truth; but we have no reason to suppose that this inspira-

tion would go any further than was requisite to qualify him for his ministry;—that any thing *besides* errors and prejudices would be altered.

If any one should imagine, that because one and the same Spirit taught one and the same Gospel to all its appointed Ministers, therefore every distinction between them was done away, all traces of individual character necessarily swallowed up in one common revelation, an attentive study of the Sacred Writers will soon convince him of his mistake. Even of the Apostles, who were all of them Jews, no two write precisely alike; the variations of *individual* character are perceptible, even when in *national* character they all agree[1].

The Apostle Paul's writings, then, must be studied as those of a man not only acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, but familiar with them from childhood: full of an early-implanted and habitual reverence for them; and disposed to refer to them for argument and for illustration, on every possible occasion. He was likely, in short, to write as a learned and zealous Jew, in every point except those in which the teaching of the Spirit led him to correct his former notions. And this divine Monitor, it should be recollected, was so far from instructing christian ministers to keep the Old Testament out of sight, that there is no point more strenuously and uniformly insisted on, than the connexion of the Old and New dispensations. Christianity is invariably represented, not as a new religion, but as the completion of a scheme long before begun: it was plainly meant to be engrafted, not on natural religion, but on Judaism. If this circumstance had been duly attended to, many of the heresies which have corrupted our religion would have been avoided.

But what were the character and situation of this Apostle's *hearers?* He was, indeed, more especially the Apostle of the Gentiles; but he appears, wherever he went, to have addressed

[1] On this point I have treated more at large in the *Bampton Lectures*. Lect. iv. pp. 124—128.

himself first to his own countrymen; his natural feelings of warm attachment and partiality towards them being not at all forbidden by his heavenly Guide, who, on the contrary, designed that the Jews should have this precedence. The promises and threats of the Gospel were to be declared "to the *Jew*, first, and also to the Greek." "It was *necessary*," says he, "that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, lo! we turn to the Gentiles." It is probable, indeed, that the number of Paul's converts among his own brethren was, in most places, but a small proportion; though in some of the churches it appears, from several circumstances, that their amount was not inconsiderable; and in every church, it is probable that Jews and "devout Greeks" (*i. e.* such as had before renounced idolatry, and acknowledged the divine origin of the Jewish religion) were to be found among the members, and among the earliest members.

In those places, however, in which the great majority of the christian brethren were converted Gentiles, it might have been supposed that the Old Testament would have been but little studied or thought of. So far however was this from being the case—so far was Paul from allowing the Jewish Scriptures, those Holy Scriptures which he represents as "able to make us wise unto salvation," to be depreciated, or the christian revelation to be regarded as any other than a completion of the Mosaic, that he seems to have expected in all his converts, an intimate acquaintance with the Old Testament; and to have earnestly, and not unsuccessfully, inculcated the necessity of interpreting the one scheme by the other, as two parts of the same great whole, and of considering, "whatsoever things were written aforetime," as "written for their learning." On the Corinthian Church, for instance, he impresses this principle as of high importance; and though but a small proportion of them probably were Jews, he evidently implies that they were not on that account the less interested in all the concerns of the Jewish

Church, whose successor was the christian :—"For[1] I would not have you ignorant," says he, "how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. . . . . But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness." And after touching on several points in the history of the Church of Israel, he assures the Corinthians that "these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come;" *i. e.* who live under the last dispensation of God; which is not, like the Mosaic, to be succeeded by any other, but will last to the end of the world.

His continual reference to the Mosaic dispensation, which was the shadow of the Gospel.

The passage just mentioned is only one out of many in which the Apostle adverts to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as of high importance to be studied by Christians. And the frequent *allusions* he makes to them as *familiar* to his hearers, and of acknowledged value in their eyes, convey his judgment on the subject far more strongly than so many direct admonitions; they indicate what was the early, the habitual, and the universal mode of instruction employed by himself and all the christian teachers. No Christian, therefore, who would copy the pattern of this divine teacher, will leave the Old Testament out of sight; but will learn from him that the former dispensation must be carefully attended to by one who would rightly understand the Gospel.

And attention to the same pattern may also serve to guard us against another error, in some respects the opposite of that just alluded to; the confounding together of the two systems in one confused medley, and blending the Law, which had "a shadow of good things to come," with the Gospel, which is the fulfilment of it: an error not uncommon with those who

[1] I have here followed the reading of the best MSS., which greatly clears the sense.

unthinkingly study the Bible as one book, without taking pains to discriminate the several parts of the great scheme of Providence it relates to. The two dispensations *correspond* in almost every point, but *coincide* in very few. Like the Flower and the Fruit of any plant, the one is a preparation for the other; and each of its parts bears some *relation* to the other, though they have but a very faint *resemblance;* the parts which are the most prominent and striking in each, respectively, being least so in the other; so that if any one were to give a representation in which the parts of the blossom and of the perfect fruit were confusedly combined and intermingled, it would be an unnatural anomaly, very unlike either the one or the other. The example of the Apostle's teaching furnishes, as I have said, a safeguard against this error; he all along represents the Law as connected with the Gospel, as the shadow with the substance;—as "our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ;" and the condition of the Israelites as *analogous* to that of Christians, but in many points dissimilar.

In several instances indeed, this correspondence and this difference are pretty generally perceived and acknowledged. That the paschal lamb, for instance, and the other Jewish sacrifices, were typical of the atoning sacrifice of the true Lamb of God, —the sin-offerings and other outward rites of purification having the same relation to ceremonial offences, and external legal justification from them, that the offering of our Lord has, to the wiping away of moral guilt, and the inward sanctification of the heart,—this is a point on which few professed Christians are ignorant or doubtful; the *correspondence*, and, at the same time, dissimilarity, having been explicitly stated, in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the *flesh;* how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your *conscience* from dead works to serve the living God?" That the promised land of Canaan, again, the place of rest to which Jesus (Joshua) conducted the

Israelites, is a type of the heavenly rest to which *our* Jesus is ready to lead his followers, is understood and admitted by most Christians. That the sanction of extraordinary *temporal* blessings and judgments, both national and individual, under which the Jews lived, is withdrawn, and succeeded by "the bringing in of a better hope" than that of the Law, is a truth not so well understood by many Christians; there is a leaning in the minds of not a few, to an expectation of that inevitable vengeance in this world on the wicked, which was denounced under the Mosaic law; and of that temporal prosperity, as the reward of obedience, which forms no part of the promises of a religion whose Founder was crucified, and whose Apostles were, "if in this life only they had hope in Christ, of all men most miserable."

The better-instructed part, however, of the christian world perceive the distinction in this point between the Old and the New dispensations; and understand that the promises and threats of the one are applicable, figuratively only, to the other; the rewards and punishments of a future life being substituted for those of the present.

There are many other points, however, which are frequently overlooked, in which the correspondence between the two systems is such as to make the former a most useful interpreter of the latter. And when we consider what a familiar acquaintance with the Law, and with the history of the Jews, Paul had himself, and expected in his hearers, we cannot doubt that this interpreter must be perpetually consulted, if we would rightly understand his Epistles.

Disputes relative to Election.

§ 2 One only of the cases to which this principle may be applied will be noticed in the present Essay. A question, which is one of the most momentous ever agitated among Christians, may be, I think, completely set at rest by such a mode of consulting the Old Testament as has been recommended. The question I allude to, is that relating to such as are called by this Apostle

and by the rest, the "*Elect*" or "*chosen* people" of God, "*called*, out of the world, [to be] Saints[1]," and inheritors of eternal life, by God's favour (or grace) through Christ. It is known that differences of no trifling moment exist among Christians in their opinions on this subject. Some maintain, as is well known, that there are among the members of Christ's visible Church, two classes of persons, the Elect and the Non-elect, who are both fixed upon arbitrarily by God's eternal, immutable, unconditional decree;—that those who are the Elect, the "called [to be] Saints," are regenerate, and made sons of God by his Spirit,—are justified in his sight through the merits of Christ,—are sanctified and led in the paths of christian holiness by the influence of divine grace, and are infallibly conducted to eternal happiness in heaven: and that others, on the contrary, *i. e.* all others, though baptized into the faith, and though they have heard the offers of the Gospel, are nevertheless non-elect, or "reprobate," passed by, and rejected by God; and consequently, are no less certainly doomed to everlasting perdition[2].

This account of the Gospel-scheme is utterly displeasing to others; who maintain that the election in question is *not arbitrary*, but has respect to men's *foreseen faith and obedience*[3]; *i. e.* that God decrees to elect such as He foresees

[1] The words enclosed in brackets have nothing corresponding to them in the Original. See Sermon on *Christian Saints*.

[2] See Note A at the end of this Essay.

[3] "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God," is an expression sometimes appealed to in support of this view, but (as will plainly appear to any one who studies the context) not correctly. The Apostle's design in employing it will be found, on attentive inquiry, to be this: it was a stumbling-block to the Jews, even to those who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, that the Gentiles should be admitted to equal privileges with themselves: the Israelites, they pleaded, had been declared to be God's peculiar and highly-favoured people; was it to be supposed that he would *alter* his plans? No, said the Apostle, there is no change in his plans; but He all along designed (and he cites the prophets to prove his assertion) to admit, at a future time, such of the Gentiles as would hear his call, into the number of his people: this, indeed, was formerly a secret, not understood by our forefathers, and now for the first time "made *manifest*" to *men*; but the design always existed "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs;" the *mystery* (*i. e.* the doctrine first hidden,

will be obedient to his commands, and passes by those whose disobedience He foresees.

No candid and well-informed student of Scripture, can, I think, deny, that arguments, in support of each of these opposite doctrines have been alleged, which have at least some degree of plausibility at first sight[1].

In support of the latter system, are urged the declarations in Scripture that "Christ died for all," that "He willeth all men to be saved," &c. as well as the general tenour of the Gospel-offers of salvation, which seem to leave all that heard them at full liberty to accept or reject them. On the other side, the expressions of Paul especially are urged, where he speaks of men as "clay in the hands of the potter," who has power to make "of the same lump, vessels to honour, and to dishonour[2]," and who speaks of the call to salvation as originating entirely in the free bounty of God, without reference to good works of ours either previous or subsequent: God hath chosen us, says Calvin, "non quia eramus, sed ut essemus sancti,"—not because we *were*, nor because He foresaw that we *should* be, but (according to Paul) in order that we *might* be holy in all good works.

It would be tedious and unnecessary to cite all the texts that have been appealed to by both parties on this question, and the arguments grounded on them. Suffice it to observe, that they are generally opposed by *other* arguments and *other* texts: and that each party has generally succeeded better in

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and afterwards revealed; which is the usual sense of the word mystery) of their election, was, of course, always *known* to God himself, though but lately revealed to *us*: they are "Elect according to the *foreknowledge* of God."

[1] So widely spread are these two schemes of interpretation that I have known a reviewer, very recently, allude to a certain Author as "an Arminian," though he had written and published his dissent from the Arminian theory, and his reasons for it. The reviewer, on having this blunder pointed out, apologised by saying that he had merely concluded him to be Arminian because he was not Calvinist; and he had supposed that every one must be either the one or the other!

It is remarkable, that by a converse error, the very same Author had been, some years before, denounced as Calvinistic, on the ground that he was not Arminian!

[2] For a remark on this passage, see § 3, of this Essay.

this, than in refuting and explaining those adduced by their opponents. In particular, the explanations given by the opponents of the Calvinistic scheme, of the passages urged in favour of it, appear to some even of themselves, (I will not say unsatisfactory, but) so far incapable of being satisfactorily laid before the mass of ordinary Christians, that they are often disposed to apprehend danger from the study of Paul's Epistles, and rather to draw the attention of their flocks to other parts of Scripture in preference.

I cannot but think that an attentive examination of the Old Testament will go far towards furnishing a key to the true meaning of Paul's and the other Apostolic epistles; and will furnish an answer not only satisfactory, but capable of being made clear to the unlearned, of the three great questions on which the whole discussion turns; viz. 1st, Whether the divine Election, as spoken of in Scripture, is there represented as ARBITRARY, or as having respect to men's foreseen conduct; 2ndly, WHO are to be regarded as the Elect; and, 3rdly, In WHAT does that Election consist?

In treating of these questions, it should be premised that I design, in the first instance, to look exclusively to the testimony of Scripture: waiving wholly, at present, the abstract questions respecting Fate and Free-will, which belong more properly to the province of Natural-religion, or of Metaphysics; and also, that my examination of Scripture will be confined to the light thrown generally on the Gospel-scheme by the Books of Moses. The christian Church being confessedly the successor of the Jewish, and the christian dispensation of the Mosaic, nothing can be more reasonable than to aid our judgment respecting the one by contemplating the other.

Questions, whether under the former dispensation Election was arbitrary;

§ 3 Now, with respect to the first question before us, Were the Israelites, who were evidently God's Called, Elect, or Chosen, Holy, and Peculiar people, were they, I say, thus chosen, arbitrarily, or not? This question seems to

admit of a speedy and complete decision. Moses clearly and repeatedly states that this selection of them *was* arbitrary. He often reminds them that they were not thus singled out from the midst of other nations for their own righteousness, since they were "a stiff-necked people," but of God's free goodness, "who will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and will be gracious to whom He will be gracious;" and "because He had a favour unto them." And with respect to their fathers, though Abraham indeed was tried and found faithful and obedient, there was certainly an arbitrary choice made of Jacob in preference to his elder brother Esau; which, indeed, is one of the cases referred to by the Apostle, who remarks, that, "while the children were yet in the womb, and had done neither good nor evil," it was declared by the oracle of God, that "the elder should serve the younger." Nor again (it should be observed) could that selection of the children of Jacob have been decreed with reference to their foreseen faith and obedience; since we know how eminently deficient they were in those qualifications: stubborn and rebellious,—continually falling into idolatry and other sins,—forgetting what great things God had wrought for them, and undervaluing their high privilege.

It would indeed be most presumptuous to pronounce that God *had* no reasons for his selection of the Israelites. Doubtless He had good reasons for it; but these are not made *known* to us. As far as *our* knowledge extends, the choice was arbitrary.

Who *were elected.*

The divine election then under the old dispensation was, it is manifest, entirely arbitrary; but, in the second place, *who* were the objects of it? Evidently, *the whole nation* without any exception. They were *all* brought out of Egypt by a mighty hand, and miraculously delivered from their enemies, and received the divine commandments through Moses, who uniformly addressed them,—not some, but all,—as God's chosen, holy, and peculiar people.

To what *the Elect were chosen.*

But, lastly, what was the nature of this election of the Israelites? *To what* were they thus chosen by their Almighty Ruler? Were

they elected absolutely and infallibly to enter the promised land, and to triumph over their enemies, and to live in security, wealth, and enjoyment? Manifestly not. They were elected to the privilege of having these blessings placed *within their reach*, on the condition of their obeying the law which God had given them; but those who refused this obedience, were not only excluded from the promised blessings; but were the objects of God's especial judgments, far beyond those inflicted on the heathen nations, who had not been so highly favoured, whose idolatry and wickedness was, generally speaking, far less uniformly and severely visited. "With a mighty hand and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out will I rule over you," was the threat denounced against the disobedient Israelites; of the fulfilment of which, numerous instances are recorded in Scripture; and one most striking one is before our eyes; the forlorn and ruined condition, as a nation[1], at the present day, of those who rejected the long-promised Messiah, and invoked his blood upon "themselves and on their children." Still, however, whether obedient or rebellious, they were all of them the peculiar and elect people of God; because on all of them,—on every individual without exception,—of that people, the *privileges* were bestowed; and to every one of them the *offer* made, of God's especial blessing and protection, on condition of their conforming to the commands He had condescended to give them. But whether they *would* thus conform or not, was all along studiously represented by Moses as a matter entirely dependent on themselves; "Behold," says he, "I have set before you this day good and evil, blessing and cursing: now, therefore, chuse blessing."

The election then of the Jews was arbitrary indeed; but it was an election, not to blessing, absolutely, but to a *privilege* and *advantage*;—to the *offer* and *opportunity* of obtaining a peculiar blessing, such as was not placed within the reach of

[1] I have enlarged on this subject in the Discourse on *National Blessings and Judgments.*

other nations. Whether they would accept the offer, or draw down God's curse on them by their disobedience, rested with themselves. And that they were left at liberty to pursue this latter course is plain, from this most remarkable circumstance; that of all the adult individuals[1] of them who came out of Egypt, and heard the law delivered from Mount Sinai, two only (besides the Levites) reached the promised land. Of the rest, the whole generation were cut off in the wilderness for their disobedience.

Application, by analogy, to the Gospel-scheme.

Now to apply these observations to the Gospel-dispensation: it is plain, as has been said, that the christian Church stands in the place of the Jewish;—that it succeeds it in the divine favour, and enjoys, not the same indeed, but *corresponding* benefits and privileges. It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose, that since both dispensations are parts of the one plan of the one heavenly Author, those benefits and privileges should be bestowed according to a similar system in each. The christian religion, however, is not, like the Jewish, confined to one *nation*, nor the christian worship to one *place*, like the temple at Jerusalem. The Church of Christ is open to all to whom the Gospel has been announced, and comprehends all who acknowledge it: the invitations of that Gospel are general; all members of that Church are "Called and Elected" by God, and are as truly his People, and under his especial government, as the Israelites ever were[2]. And though they do not consist of any one *nation* in particular, they are arbitrarily selected and called to this privilege, out of the rest of the world, and in contradistinction from their unenlightened

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[1] Exclusive however, it appears, of the Tribe of Levi.

[2] It is very remarkable that the Apostles never themselves applied to their converts the title of "Christians." They preferred calling them by titles which had long been *known as designating God's peculiar People of old*,—the Israelites after the flesh; such as "Saints"—"Brethren"—"Elect," or "Chosen," &c., in order, no doubt, to point out that the Gospel was a *sequel* to the Mosaic dispensation, and that the Believers, of all races, were become by adoption "the ISRAEL of God." See Sermon on *Christian Saints*.

ancestors, according to God's unsearchable will, for reasons known to Him alone, no less than the Israelites were of old. Some nations, we know, had the Gospel preached to them long before others: the Apostles were directed by the Holy Ghost what countries they should first visit and enlighten by their ministry; and many there are that remain in ignorance of Christianity to this day.

We can give no account of this distinction, but that such is God's pleasure. No reason that *we* know of can be assigned why we ourselves, for instance, in this country, should have received the light of the Gospel, while many other regions of the earth remain in the darkness of idolatry. The "Calling" and selection of us and of other Christians to the knowledge of the true God, seems as arbitrary as that of the Israelites. And as this promise belonged not to *some* only, but to every one, of that nation, whether he chose to avail himself of it, or to convert it into a heavy curse by his neglect of it; so, we may conclude that every Christian is called and elected to the christian privileges, just as every Jew was to his; but that it rests with us to use or abuse the advantage[1]. The Jews were not chosen to enjoy God's favour and to enter into the promised land, *absolutely;* but to have the *offer* of that favour, and the promise of that land, on condition of their obedience; and as many as were rebellious, perished in the wilderness. So also, we may conclude, no Christian is elected to eternal salvation, absolutely; but only to the knowledge of the Gospel,—to the privileges of the christian Church,—to the offer of God's Holy Spirit—and to the *promise* of final salvation, on condition of being a faithful follower of Christ.

Confirmed by Paul's express authority, and by the analogy of God's general providence.

Such, I say, we might antecedently conjecture, must be the right interpretation of the Apostle's language, considering how constantly and how clearly all the circumstances of the old Dispensation must be supposed to have been before his mind. But in the instance now before us we are

[1] See the last Essay in this volume.

not left to conjecture: he himself draws the parallel for us, and strongly directs our attention to it; reminding us, in the most distinct manner, of the principles by which we are to be guided in our examination of the Gospel-scheme. He not only always addresses his converts (the very persons whom he all along congratulates as the Called, and Favoured, and Elect of God) as if it depended on themselves to avail themselves, or not, of these offers,—to "lay hold on eternal life," or to forfeit it by their own neglect,—but he also warns them, from the very example of the Israelites, against the error of misunderstanding *what* it was to which they were elected. For some of them, it is probable, having been always addressed as the "Chosen" of God, were disposed to indulge in careless security, relying on their baptismal privileges, and confident of final salvation independent of such exertions as can alone justify that confidence; even as the Jews "thought to say within themselves, We are Abraham's children." The Apostle, accordingly, himself expressly points out the correspondence between their case and that of the children of Israel; exhorting them to take warning from the backslidings and punishment of their predecessors, God's favoured People of old. The reference which he makes to the case of the Israelites follows immediately his illustration from the Isthmian Games, and is a portion of the same exhortation. The division between the ninth and tenth chapters (and many readers are apt practically to forget that these divisions are not the work of the Sacred Writers, but were made many ages after, for convenience of reference) is in this place unfortunate, as breaking the continuity of the discourse. Having described himself as "running," and "fighting," and "keeping his body in subjection," in order to win "an incorruptible crown," and having exhorted the Corinthians from his own example, to do the same, he adds, "*For* I would not that ye should be ignorant, brethren," &c[1]. And he proceeds to point out to them,

[1] This is according to the reading of the best MSS., and of that very ancient version the Latin Vulgate. And I believe all critics are now agreed that the right reading is not δὲ but γάρ.

first, that it was not a part only, but the *whole* of the Israelites who were thus favoured: "*all* our fathers were under the cloud, and *all* passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." But, notwithstanding this, (as he proceeds to point out) "with many [most][1] of them God was not well-pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted; neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; . . . . neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three-and-twenty thousand; neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents; neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things" (he adds) "happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come;" and thence he deduces the great general conclusion, "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Let not the Christian, that is, though he is one of God's peculiar and favoured People, as the Israelites were of old, flatter himself that he is chosen, any more than they were, to the absolute attainment of a final blessing, but only to the *offer* of it, together with the privileges and advantages which will enable him to attain it: let him not doubt that the option is left to him, as it was to them, of securing, or forfeiting, his ultimate reward: let him learn from the example of the Israelites, that neither his promised inheritance is infallibly secured to him *without* obedience, nor he himself absolutely secured *in* the requisite obedience, without any watchfulness on his part; since the far greater portion of those whom God brought out of Egypt never reached the promised land[2].

It is worth remembering, that the system just described is

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[1] τοῖς πλείοσιν.

[2] "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not."—Jude 5.

the same with that pursued in the ordinary course of God's providence also: a man's being born, for instance, heir to great wealth,—to high rank,—or to a kingdom,—of a healthy constitution,—or of superior abilities, does not depend on himself; but it does depend on himself whether such advantages as these shall prove a blessing to him, by his making a right use of them, or shall aggravate his condemnation, through his ill-employment or neglect of them[1].

Any one then who diligently looks to the analogy both of God's ordinary dealings with Man, and of his former dispensation to the Jews, and who carefully interprets the New Testament by the Old, will be enabled, I think, to clear up the greater part of a difficulty which has furnished matter of dispute among Christians for many centuries. By contemplating the correspondence between the Jewish and the Gospel-schemes, he will clearly perceive that there is no such distinction among Christians as the "Called" and the uncalled,—the "Elect" and the Non-elect;—that the Gospel itself is a call to all who have heard it; and that those who, instead of obeying it, wait for any further call, are deluded by the father of lies, who is watching for their destruction.—He will perceive, that though all who are born in a christian country, and initiated into Christ's Church, are arbitrarily elected to this invaluable privilege, their salvation is *not* arbitrary, but will depend on the use they make of their privileges; those, namely, to which all Christians are called,—the knowledge of the Gospel, the aids of the Holy Spirit, and the offer of eternal life; privileges of which all are exhorted, but none compelled, to make a right use; and which will prove ultimately either a blessing or a curse to each, according to the use he makes of them.

No technical uniformity of

When it is contended, however, that the term "Elect," or that any other scriptural expression,

[1] The view here taken of Election some have hastily supposed to be *at variance* with that of Archbp. Sumner in his *Apostolic Preaching*: while others have, no less erroneously, supposed them *identical*. On this point I have offered a remark in the Preface: p. xix.

language to be looked for in Scripture.

is to be interpreted in this or in that sense, this must be understood, in reference to the *particular passages* in question, or to the generality;—not, as implying that no other sense is anywhere admissible, and that if the explanation given be correct, it must hold good in every passage where the word occurs. For instance, when the Apostles address their converts universally as the "Elect" or "Chosen" of God, (even as the whole nation of Israel were of old his Chosen) this must be understood of their being chosen out of the whole mass of the Gentiles, to certain peculiar privileges, unknown to successive generations of their ancestors, but of which *they* were called and invited to avail themselves. But our Lord applies the word differently in the parables of the labourers of the vineyard, and of the marriage-feast. The wedding, He tells us, was furnished with guests by an indiscriminate collection of all that could be found in the highways; but the guest who neglected to put on the wedding-garment[1], was "cast into the outer darkness;" "for many," he adds, "are called, but few chosen;" many, that is, are "called" to the enjoyment of high privileges, but few make such a use of the advantage as to be finally "chosen;" not, in this instance, (as the word is more commonly employed) chosen to a *privilege* merely, but to *ultimate reward*;—chosen as having rightly availed themselves of that privilege;—selected from among the faithless and disobedient to "enter into the joy of their Lord." Not that in these cases the word "chosen" is used in different *meanings*, but that its *application* is different; both parties are, in the same sense, "chosen;" but the things *to which* they are chosen are different; and there is a corresponding difference in the principles on which the choice is conducted[2].

There is, indeed, no more fruitful source of error in this, and in many other points, than the practice of interpreting

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[1] The garment *provided for him*, according to Oriental custom, by the *giver of the feast*. See 2. Kings x. 22.

[2] See *Elements of Logic. Fallacies*, ch. iii. § 10.

Scripture on the principles of a *scientific system*, and endeavouring to make out, as in mathematics, a complete technical vocabulary, with precise definitions of all the terms employed, such as may be applied in every case where they occur[1]. Nothing, manifestly, was further from the design of the Sacred Writers, than to frame any such system: their writings were popular, not scientific; they expressed their meaning, on each occasion, in the terms which, on each occasion, suggested themselves as best fitted to convey it; and he who would interpret rightly each of these terms, must interpret it in each passage according to the context of the place where it is found. And wherever the term "Elect" relates (as it does in most instances) to an arbitrary, irrespective, unconditional decree, it will, I think, be found invariably to bear the sense in which I have explained it.

Misinterpretations of Scripture produced by antecedent bias.

That a doctrine, therefore, so opposite to the one here laid down, should have been deduced from the Scriptures by many ingenious and diligent students of them, one can hardly avoid attributing, in some degree, to their entering on the study with a strong antecedent bias in favour of the conclusion they draw; in consequence of their regarding it as a truth abstractedly demonstrable by reason. But for such bias, we should hardly find so many passages of Scripture interpreted so hastily, and often so much wrested from their obvious sense, to make them afford confirmation of the favourite hypothesis.

For instance, the scriptural similitude of the Potter and the Clay is often triumphantly appealed to, as a proof that God has from eternity decreed, and, what is more, has *revealed to us* that He has so decreed, the salvation or perdition of each individual, without any other reason assigned than that such is his will and pleasure. "We are in his hands," say these predestinarians, "as clay in the potter's, who hath power, of the same lump, to make one vessel to honour and another to dis-

[1] See Essay vi. § 4, and vii. § 2.

honour;" not observing, in their hasty eagerness to seize on every apparent confirmation of their system, that this similitude, as far as it goes, rather makes against them; since the potter never makes any vessel for the *express purpose* of being broken and *destroyed*. This comparison accordingly agrees much better with the view here taken: the potter, according to his own arbitrary choice, makes "of the same lump, one vessel to honour and another to dishonour;" *i.e.*, some to nobler, and some to meaner uses; but all, for *some* use; none with design that it should be cast away, and dashed to pieces. Even so, the Almighty, of his own arbitrary choice, causes some to be born to wealth or rank, others to poverty and obscurity;—some in a heathen, and others in a christian country; the advantages and privileges bestowed on each, are various, and, as far as *we* can see, arbitrarily dispensed; the final rewards or punishments depend, as we are plainly taught, on the use or abuse of those advantages. Wealth and power, and christian knowledge, and all other advantages, may be made either a blessing or a curse to the possessor; since they plainly answer to the talents in our Lord's parable. Why one servant had five talents intrusted to him, another two, and another one,—in what consisted "their several abilities,"—we are not told; though we are clearly taught that the distribution was *not* made on the ground of the *fore-seen use* they would make of the talents; else, he who received the one, and kept it laid up in a napkin, would not have been intrusted with *any*. But we *are* plainly told on what principles all these servants were *ultimately judged* by their Master; those who had received the five, and the two talents, were rewarded, not from arbitrary choice, but because they had rightly employed the deposit; and the unprofitable servant was punished not because he had only received one, but because he had let it lie idle[1].

1 Those who profess to maintain the doctrine of Absolute Election, and not of Reprobation, seem to forget that (besides the other difficulties they are exposed to) the passages adduced in favour of the one, and of the other, are equally strong, and occur, usually, both together: so that it seems unreasonable

The "hardening of Pharaoh's heart" again, which is mentioned in Scripture, is often triumphantly appealed to, as a recorded instance in which (according to the hasty interpretation sometimes adopted) God made the King of Egypt, what we call hard-hearted; that is, *cruel* and *remorseless;* on purpose to display his Almighty power upon him: whereas a very moderate attention to the context would plainly evince that this (whether true or false) is very far from being revealed in Scripture; but that, on the contrary, the "hardening" (or as some translate, the "strengthening") of Pharaoh's heart[1] must mean a judicial blindness of intellect as to his own interest, and a vain and absurd self-confidence, which induced him to hold out against Omnipotence. For, it is remarkable that the *cruelties* he had practised, had all of them taken place *before* any mention is made of God's hardening his heart. The tyrant who had subjected to grievous slavery, and attempted to extirpate the Israelites, could scarcely, after that, be *made* cruel; but the most unrelenting oppressor would have let them go, through mere selfish prudence, had he not been supernaturally infatuated, when he saw that they were "a snare unto him," and that "Egypt was destroyed" through the mighty plagues inflicted on their account.

Errors in reasoning committed on both sides.

To sum up, then, in a single sentence, the error which appears to me to have originated from a neglect of the lesson which the Old Testament may supply: the doctrine that final salvation is represented in Scripture as resting solely on the arbitrary appointment of God, is deduced from two premises; 1st, that

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to interpret the one on one principle, and the other on a different one, *e. g.* "Jacob have I loved, and Esau *have I hated.*" . . . . "One vessel to honour, and *another to dishonour:*" . . . . He "will have mercy on whom He will have mercy," and "whom *He will He hardeneth:*" &c.

[1] The "heart" is continually employed by the Sacred Writers to denote the *understanding;* as when our Lord is said to "upbraid the disciples for their unbelief and *hardness of heart,*" &c. They never, I believe, employed σκληροκαρδία, to signify cruelty. The same appears to have been anciently the usage of our own language also; of which we retain a remnant, in the expression of "learning any thing *by heart.*"

Election infallibly implies salvation; and, 2dly, that Election is entirely arbitrary; whence it follows, certainly, that final salvation is arbitrary. Now many of the opponents of this conclusion are accustomed to deny the true premise, and admit the false one; acknowledging that Election everywhere necessarily implies ultimate salvation, but contending that it is *not* arbitrary, but depends on foreseen faith and obedience; a position which gives their opponents a decided advantage over them, and which the analogy of the Old dispensation to the New may convince us is untenable; whereas, in denying that Election does necessarily imply salvation, they would find the whole analogy of the Old Testament, and the general tenour of the Apostle Paul's admonitions, so completely in their favour, that the offensive conclusions would be, as far as Scripture-testimony goes, irrecoverably overthrown: and it would be seen that the abstract metaphysical questions respecting Fate and Free-will, are left by the Bible exactly where it finds them, undecided and untouched.

Metaphysical difficulties, resulting from ambiguities of language.

§ 4 Without entering at large on the metaphysical questions just alluded to, one remark respecting them will not be irrelevant, as it may throw light on the subject more particularly before us. I mean that the difficulty and confusion in which such questions have been involved, have, in a great degree, arisen from inattention to the ambiguity of one particular class of words—"possible[1]" and "impossible," "necessary," "certain," "contingent," and many others of corresponding significations to these; which have, by their undetected ambiguity, bewildered in a maze of fruitless logomachy most of those who have treated of the subject. "Certainty," for instance, and "uncertainty," which in the primary sense, denote the state of our own mind, have thence been transferred to the *facts* and *events* respecting which *we* are certain

[1] See *Logic*, Appendix, article *Possible*. See also Appendix, No. I. to Archbishop King's Discourse on *Predestination*.

or uncertain; and ultimately, have come to be considered as indicating an intrinsic quality in the events themselves, and not merely the relation in which they stand to our knowledge or ignorance of them; and "necessity," as well as other words allied to it, whose signification sometimes refers to *coercion*, or absence of *power*, sometimes again merely to undoubting and complete *knowledge*, have led to endless fallacies and perplexities, when this distinction has been overlooked.

Thus the "necessity" (*i.e.* the absence of freedom) of human actions, has by many been inferred from God's certain foreknowledge of them. And to this it is not, I think, altogether a satisfactory reply (which is often made), that the divine prescience does not fetter or control men's actions, nor in any way operate upon them, any more than *our* knowledge of any fact is the cause of its being such; for though this is undeniably true, it hardly meets the difficulty; since it is not meant, I apprehend, that the divine foreknowledge *makes* actions necessary, but that it *implies* that they *are* so; just as any one's seeing some object before him, implies the real present existence of that object; though no one supposes that his seeing it is, in any respect, the *cause* of its existence.

But the chief source of this perplexity is the equivocal employment of the word "necessity;" which, in one sense, relates to *knowledge* alone, and, therefore, is, of course, implied by prescience; but in another sense, relates to *compulsion*, or want of power; which prescience does by no means imply[1]. When we speak, for instance, of the "necessity" of mathematical truths, we mean merely that they admit of no *doubt*. And again, when we say that a man pining in captivity *cannot but* eagerly embrace the offer of freedom and restoration to his country, we mean not that he is thus placed under *compulsion*, but that we are *well-assured* and have no *doubt* he *will* do so. On the other hand, when we say that, while in captivity, he *cannot but* submit to the will of his master, we mean that he

[1] See Tucker's *Light of Nature*, chap. xxvi.

wants *power* to resist, and *liberty* to escape; and when we speak of the necessity of death, we mean that mortals are *unable* to avoid it.

If this distinction had been duly attended to, it would hardly, I think, have been contended that *that* necessity of our actions, which the divine prescience implies, is at all incompatible with our freedom and power to act otherwise. Whether our conduct *be, in fact,* under any restraint or not, at least no restraint is implied by the mere foreknowledge of it. Let it be supposed (and the case is at least *conceivable*) that you were fully and accurately acquainted with all the inclinations of some man who was left at perfect liberty to follow them; you could then as distinctly know and as exactly describe his future conduct, as any past event; and the very ground of your thus foreseeing and foretelling it would be, not his being under restraint, but his entire freedom from it; for, the knowledge of his inclination, if he were *not* free to follow it, would not enable you to foresee the event.

The divine foreknowledge, again, of "contingent" or "uncertain" events, would not have been made a matter of such mysterious difficulty, if it had been remembered that the same thing may be contingent and uncertain to one person, which is not so to another; since those terms denote no quality in the events themselves; any more than the terms "visible" and "invisible" when applied to eclipses; inasmuch as that which is visible in one part of the world, is invisible in another. For, the same event may, in like manner, be both a *contingency* and a *certainty;* though not to *the same person.* Any event, for instance, which occurred yesterday in some distant part of the world, is, to us, uncertain and contingent; and one who calculates on its having taken place in this way or that, would be said to run the risk of fortune; though to those on the spot there is no contingency in the case.

Before I dismiss the consideration of this subject, I would suggest one caution relative to a class of objections frequently urged against the Calvinistic scheme—those drawn from the

conclusions of what is called Natural religion, respecting the moral attributes of the Deity; which, it is contended, rendered the reprobation of a large portion of mankind an absolute impossibility. That such objections do reduce the predestinarian to a great strait, is undeniable; and not seldom are they urged with exulting scorn, with bitter invective, and almost with anathema. But we should be very cautious how we employ such weapons as may recoil upon ourselves. Arguments of this description have often been adduced, such as, I fear, will crush beneath the ruins of the hostile structure the blind assailant who seeks to overthrow it. It is a frightful but an undeniable truth, that multitudes, even in christian countries, are born and brought up under such circumstances as afford them no probable, often no possible, chance of obtaining a knowledge of religious truths, or a habit of moral conduct, but are even trained from infancy in superstitious error and gross depravity. Why this should be permitted, neither Calvinist nor Arminian can explain; nay, why the Almighty does not cause to die in the cradle every infant whose future wickedness and misery, if suffered to grow up, He foresees, is what no system of religion, natural or revealed, will enable us satisfactorily to account for.

Objections connected with the origin of evil, dangerous for both parties.

In truth, these are merely branches of the *one* great difficulty, *the existence of evil*, which may almost be called the *only* difficulty in theology. It assumes indeed various shapes;—it is, by many, hardly recognized as a difficulty; and not a few have professed and believed themselves to have solved it; but it still meets them, though in some new and disguised form, at every turn; like a resistless stream, which, when one channel is dammed up, immediately forces its way through another. And as the difficulty is one not *peculiar to any one* hypothesis, but bears equally on all alike, whether of revealed or of natural religion, it is better in point of prudence as well as of fairness, that the consequences of it should not be pressed as an objection against any. The Scriptures do not pretend

(as some have rashly imagined) to clear up this awful mystery: they give us no explanation of the original *cause* of the evil that exists; but they teach us how to avoid its *effects:* and since they leave this great and perplexing question just where they find it, it is better for us to leave it among "the secret things which belong unto the Lord our God," and to occupy ourselves with "the things which are revealed," and which concern us practically,—which "*belong* unto us and to our children," that we may "*do* all the words of God's law."

And equally to blame are both those who profess to explain, where God has not given us revelation, the reasons of his dealings with Man, and those again who insist on it that in such and such a case He *had* no reason at all, but acted as He did "to declare his sovereignty," and "for his own glory;" as if He could literally desire glory! When the Most High has merely revealed to us his Will, we have no right to pronounce that He *had* no reasons for it except his will, because He has not made them known to us. Even an earthly king, who is not responsible to any of his subjects for the reasons of his commands, may think fit sometimes to issue commands without explaining his reasons: and it would be very rash for any one to conclude that he had *no* reason at all, but acted from mere caprice.

So also, a dutiful child will often have to say, "I do so and so because my parents have commanded me; *that* is reason enough for *me.*" But though this is—to the child—a very good reason for *obeying* the command, it would be a very bad reason with the *parents* for *giving* that command. And he would show his filial veneration and trust, not, by taking for granted that his parents *had* no reason for their commands, but, on the contrary, by taking for granted that there *was* a good reason both for acting as they did, and for not giving him any explanation.

It is therefore no pious humility, but, on the contrary, great presumption, for Man to pronounce—where Scripture does not tell us—either what were the reasons of God's dealings with us,

or that He had none at all. One who pretends to be so much wiser, or better informed, than the Apostles and Prophets, as to tell us what they knew not, or at least were not commissioned to make known, must greatly over-rate the faculties of Man.

We indeed are exhorted—and very rightly—to "do all for the glory of God." It is of advantage to *Man* that our Heavenly Father should be glorified; but to attribute this, as a motive, to *Him*, and to suppose that *He* can covet glory for his *own* sake, is an idea most absurd and most degrading.

And a truly humble-minded Christian, if asked to explain why any evil at all is permitted to exist, will answer that this is a question beyond Man's natural powers, and on which Scripture gives us no revelation; but he would add, that though the Scriptures do not tell us what *is* the cause of evil, they do teach us—which is no small matter—what is *not* the cause. That it cannot be from ill-will, or indifference, or caprice, on the part of the Most High, is proved by the sufferings undergone by his BELOVED ONE, "in whom He was well-pleased."

If such a Christian be asked to prove that it is untrue that God inflicts evil (as some have dared to maintain) "for *no cause* at all, but that such is his will," and that it is for the "setting forth of his Glory," and the assertion "of his Sovereignty,"—if asked this, he might reply that it is fully disproved by the Son of God having been Himself "made perfect through suffering." For, no conceivable Being—not even a tyrant—would ever, wantonly and through mere caprice, inflict sufferings on the object of his own strong love.

Though we know, therefore, that from some cause, unknown to us, evil does exist, we are assured that that cause *cannot* be a deficiency of loving-kindness in the Most High.

The chief object of inquiry to be, what truths are revealed,

§ 5 It is on the above principles, viz. that the first point of inquiry at least ought to be what doctrines are *revealed* in God's word,—and that we ought to expect that the doctrines so

as being relative to man, and practically needful.

revealed should be, not matters of speculative curiosity, but of *practical* importance—such as "*belong* to us that we may do them;"—it is in conformity, I say, with these principles, that I have waived the question as to the *truth or falsity* of the Calvinistic doctrine of Election; inquiring only whether it is *revealed*. And one of the reasons for deciding that question in the negative, is the very circumstance that the doctrine is, if rightly viewed, of a purely *speculative* character, not "*belonging* to us" practically, —and which *ought* not at least, in any way, to influence our conduct.

It has indeed been frequently objected to the Calvinistic doctrines, that they lead, if consistently acted upon, to a sinful, or to a careless, or to an inactive life; and the inference deduced from this alleged tendency, has been that they are not true.

This suspicion is probably not grounded *entirely* on abstract reasonings, but partly also on the expressions actually used by some eminent predestinarian writers. Augustine, for instance, distinctly says that "God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills, whithersoever He will, whether *it be to good or to evil.*" [*De Gratiâ et libero Arbitrio*, c. xxi.] Zwingle again [*De Providentiâ Dei*, Vol. i. c. 6, p. 366] says that "God incites the robber to commit murder; and that the man kills his victim under a divine impulse."

Beza says the very same. [*De Prædest. Op.* Vol. iii. p. 231.] Calvin also expressly declares that "each preparation" [that for salvation and that for destruction] "must undoubtedly depend on the secret counsels of God," [*Comm. on Rom.* ix. 23,] and that "Because God has willed a man's destruction, the obstinacy of the man's heart is a divine preparation for his ruin;" [Calvin, *Inst.* iv. 3.] On the other hand, "the Last Day," says a modern writer, "will bring forward *numberless examples* of salvation, where divine grace has gloriously triumphed in the conversion of sinners in *their last moments*, when the *whole life* has been spent before in hardness and impeni-

tence." [Dr. Hawker's *Zion's Pilgrim*, p. 160.] And according to two works *edited by Mr. Romaine*, "As it was not any loveliness in elect persons which moved God to love them at first, so, neither shall their unlovely backslidings deprive them of it." [Coles on *God's Sovereignty*, p. 294.] And, "though a believer be black as hell, polluted with guilt, defiled with sin, yet in Christ he is all fair, without spot; free from sin as viewed by God in Christ, fully reconciled to Him, and standing without trespasses before Him." [Mason's *Spiritual Treasury*, p. 141, and 142.]

And many more such passages might be cited. All of these will admit, no doubt, of some such explanation (in a "non-natural sense") as to be not incompatible with morality. But it is surely a culpable rashness to dwell on any doctrines not plainly contained in Scripture, when they cannot possibly do any practical good, and *may* do harm; being *then* only innoxious when so explained as to be wholly inoperative.

And the more purely moral any one is in his own life,—the more free from all taint of practical Antinomianism,—the greater is the danger to which he will expose many others, if he preaches and recommends by the goodness of his own personal character, doctrines, of which one interpretation, and that the most obvious (though not the one he himself adopts) tends to carelessness in moral conduct. He will be like a person of such a constitution as to be proof against the effects of large quantities of opium, or of ardent spirits, and who allows his example to seduce others of weaker constitution into what is, to them, a dangerous excess.

But the above is a totally distinct line of argument, both in premises and conclusion, from that now adverted to; and I mention it, not for the purpose either of maintaining or impugning it, but merely of pointing out the distinction. Whatever may be, in fact, the practical ill tendency of the Calvinistic scheme, it is undeniable that many pious and active Christians, who have adopted it, have denied any such tendency,—have attributed the mischievous consequences drawn, not to their

doctrines rightly understood, but to the perversion and abuse of them;—and have so explained them, to their own satisfaction, as to be compatible and consistent with active virtue[1]. Now if, instead of objecting to, we admit, the explanations of this system, which the soundest and most approved of its advocates have given, we shall find that, when understood as they would have it, it can lead to *no* practical result whatever. Some Christians, according to them, are eternally enrolled in the book of life, and infallibly ordained to salvation, while others are reprobate and absolutely excluded: but as the preacher (they add) has no means of knowing, in the first instance at least, *which* persons belong to which class; and since those who are thus ordained, are to be saved through the *means* God has appointed; the offers, and promises, and threatenings of the Gospel are to be addressed to all alike, as if no such distinction existed. The preacher, in short, is to *act* in all respects, as if the system were not true[2].

Each individual Christian again, according to them, though he is to believe that he either is, or is not, absolutely destined to eternal salvation, yet is also to believe, that *if* his salvation

[1] Some have intimated a suspicion that there is some connexion between this class of doctrines, and persecution; adducing, among other things, the case of the burning of Servetus by Calvin; (who does certainly seem to have been, individually, of a stern, overbearing and intolerant character) and the bitter persecutions of the Arminians by the Calvinists in Holland. The celebrated English Long Parliament, again, in which the Puritans predominated, remonstrated strongly with the King against the toleration afforded to Papists and Arminians; both of whom they were for putting down by force. This is noticed in the *Life of Oliver Cromwell*, by M. Merle d'Aubigné; who, by the way, seems himself to think that the Parliament was nearly right, and that there is not much to chuse between a Papist and an Arminian. But it should be remembered that at the time of the Reformation, and long after, it was held by almost *all* denominations of Christians to be a sacred duty to put down all false doctrine by the civil sword. And though this most unchristian principle is now much less prevalent than formerly, it is still far from being extinct.

[2] It has been already observed that even *past* events may often be, to us, as completely "contingent" as future ones, and demand from us a corresponding procedure. A General, for instance, may be fully assured of a hostile force having landed either in one or the other of two places, though uncertain in which: and in that case he will take measures for guarding against an attack from the one, and also from the other, of those two places; though the enemy, he knows, cannot actually be in both.

is decreed, his holiness of life is also decreed:—he is to judge of his own state by "the fruits of the Spirit" which he brings forth: to live in sin, or to relax his virtuous exertions, would be an indication of his not being really (though he may flatter himself he is) one of the Elect. And it may be admitted that one who does practically adopt and conform to this explanation of the doctrine will not be led into any evil by it; since his conduct will not be in any respect influenced by it. When thus explained, it is reduced to a purely speculative dogma, barren of all practical results.

If we could suppose an intelligent and benevolent physician, who was ministering to a great number of sick persons, to receive from Heaven a communication by an Angel, informing him that of these persons some would recover under his treatment, while others were, according to the will of Providence, so deeply struck with disease, that nothing could relieve them, and that they would inevitably die, he would probably say that this just was the opinion he had himself already formed; but that he should be glad to be informed *which* of his patients belonged to each class, in order that he might bestow all his attention on the one, and not waste his time and his medicines on the other. But if he were then told that this was a secret, not to be imparted to him, and that he must judge for himself in each case as well as he could, *who* were, or were not, in a perfectly hopeless state, it is plain he would be left just where he was before, and would have received as a revelation, an announcement which *revealed*—to all practical purposes—nothing at all.

Some persons however, not deficient in good sense on other points, imagine themselves to derive from this doctrine a consolatory satisfaction, which they do in fact feel, and perhaps not without reason, but the real grounds of which they mis-state. The doctrine that *some* persons are elected absolutely to final salvation, they confound with the belief—a highly consolatory one, no doubt—that they *themselves* are of the number. But as long as any decree is (as our XVIIth

Article expresses it) "nobis arcanum," *secret* to *us*, we have no more satisfactory certainty than if no such decree had existed. Our knowledge or belief that any event—no matter whether past, present, or future—is *fixed*, leaves it still a contingency to *us*, till we know in *what way* it is fixed. Suppose for instance a man knows that a law-cause on which his whole property depends was decided yesterday at some distant place; if he expressed his satisfaction in this knowledge, you might ask him why he should be rejoiced to know that he is *either* secured from loss, or *else* ruined. He would probably reply by dwelling on the goodness of his cause, the ability of his Advocate, and the uprightness and wisdom of the Judge. "But then you mistake," it might be answered, "the ground of your satisfaction: for all these circumstances are what you were equally aware of the day *before* the trial came on; and it is on *these* and on the consequent belief in a *favourable* decision, that your satisfaction is really founded; not, on the mere knowledge that *some* decision has been made, which is "secret to us."

Taking the system in question then, as expounded by its soundest advocates, it is impossible to show any one point in which a person is called upon either to act or to feel, in any respect differently, *in consequence* of his adopting it. And this conclusion indeed may be considered as virtually admitted by the maintainers of the predestinarian scheme; since whenever they are engaged in setting forth the beneficial results of their doctrines, they invariably dwell on such as are *not* peculiar to them; such as, faith in the Atonement,—self-abasement and renunciation of all reliance on our own merits,—gratitude for Christ's redeeming mercy,—and reliance on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit; and other such doctrines, which are indeed both true and of inestimable practical value, but which have no necessary, or natural connexion with the peculiar notions of Calvin respecting Election; and which, in fact, are sincerely and heartily embraced by numbers who reject those notions.

Were I as much inclined to enter into controversy as I am

averse to it, on this point at least, I should have no temptation to do so; since I cannot devise or even conceive any more decisive proofs of what has been just remarked, than the very objections adduced by those who wish to disprove it. Let any one try the experiment of proposing to predestinarians the assertion just made, of the purely-speculative character of the doctrines in question; and he will find the grounds on which it is denied, sufficient to satisfy an unbiassed mind of its truth. They will allege the cheering stimulant of love and gratitude which a man feels who is convinced that his sins are forgiven, and that a "crown of righteousness" is laid up for him after he shall "have fought the good fight, and finished his course:" but they will admit that this confidence is false and dangerous, unless he shall have ascertained by careful and candid self-examination that he is practically imbued with christian hope, faith, and charity, and is earnestly striving to "increase more and more," and to "grow in grace" to his life's end. Now all this may be the case with one who does *not* hold the absolute election to salvation of some, and the reprobation of others: while, on the other hand, the fullest conviction of the final perseverance and acceptance of God's Elect, affords no satisfaction to one who may doubt whether he *himself* is *one* of the elect. The cheering prospect is supplied, not by the *general* doctrine of divine decrees, but by each man's view of his *own* christian state of holiness. And a confidence founded *on good grounds*, I for one at least, should never think of repressing[1].

They will enumerate, again, the many zealous and active Christians who have been strict predestinarians;—they will speak of the Reformers, forward in testifying against Romish errors, who have held the same tenet; and of the attachment of many bigoted Romanists to the doctrine of free-will; (though, by the way, Augustine, the strenuous advocate of predestination, is, (among the Fathers,) rather the favourite saint of the Romish church), as well as the immoral lives of many

[1] See the next Essay.

who reject predestination, &c. But if any one keeps close to the original question, and persists in asking, How do you *trace* those good effects to a belief in your absolute decrees? How do you show that your *peculiar* doctrines are, not merely *compatible* with christian virtue, (for that is admitted,) but *conducive* to it? How do you trace these other ill effects to a rejection of those peculiar doctrines? How is it proved that the parties respectively act as they do, properly *in consequence* of their belief or disbelief of this tenet?—if, I say, these questions are persisted in, and all irrelevant matter set aside, I am much mistaken if any satisfactory answer will be obtained.

The fact is that several of the most important and truly-practical doctrines of Christianity have been, in the minds of some men, so intimately blended, from their childhood, with other tenets which are *not* practical, that they themselves, unless possessed of unusual clearness of thought, are utterly unable to conceive them disunited; and might even be in some danger of abandoning what is essential, were they induced to give up some other point, in reality totally unconnected with it. Their whole system of faith may be compared to some of the ancient compound medicines, of great efficacy and value, though cumbered with several drugs that are utterly inert. Many practitioners unskilled in analysis, cannot conceive but that the success with which the compound is often administered is a proof of the efficacy of each ingredient, and of the absurdity of thinking to separate them.

It is common in cases of this kind, to appeal to the testimony of *Experience*; though but a small proportion of even the most experienced men are fit judges of what it is that their experience does testify. He who has long been accustomed to administer a certain compound medicine, or to teach a certain system of doctrines, and who has found his patients recover, or his hearers improve, will often believe, not only that every part of this compound is essential, but that this is established by experience[1].

[1] See *Elements of Rhetoric*, Part II. chap. ii. § 5.

I am far from thinking harshly of predestinarians, or of deciding that their peculiar doctrines are altogether untrue; though to me they do not appear, at least, to be either *practical*, or *revealed* truths. I do not call on them to renounce their opinions as heretical, but merely to abstain from imposing on others as a necessary part of the christian faith, a doctrine which cannot be *clearly* deduced from Scripture; and which there is this additional reason for supposing *not* to be revealed in Scripture, that it cannot be shown to have any *practical* tendency. For since it is plainly the object of the Scriptures to declare to us such truths as it concerns us to know, with a view to the regulation of our lives, not, such as are, to us, mere matters of speculative curiosity; and since the doctrines in question, when so explained as to lead to no *evil* results, lead to *no* practical results at all, the natural inference must be (even independent of the arguments formerly urged) that these doctrines are *not* such as we can reasonably expect at least, to find revealed in Scripture; and if not so *revealed*, be they true or false, they can constitute no part of the *christian faith*[1]. It is not contended that the doctrines in question have a *hurtful* influence on human conduct, and consequently are *untrue;* but that they have, according to the soundest exposition of them, *no* influence on our conduct whatever; and, consequently, (revelation being not designed to impart mere speculative knowledge,)[2] that they are not to be taught as *revealed* truths.

The danger of misleading some and disgusting others, not to be wantonly incurred.

§ 6 Let it not be said, however, that, being at least harmless, it is unimportant whether they are inculcated or not; they are harmless, *to those* who adopt them in the sense, and with the qualifications just mentioned; but it does not follow that they are harmless to others. On the one hand that the doctrines of "predestination and our election in Christ" may be

[1] See Essay IV. (First Series.) [2] *Ibid.*

so held as to prove (according to the language of our XVIIth Article) a "dangerous downfall," will hardly be denied by any[1]; and, on the other hand, they may prove a stumbling-block to those who do *not* hold them, by raising a prejudice against other doctrines—some of the most important of Christianity, —when taught in conjunction with these, and represented as connected with them. Now it is to be admitted, indeed, that there may be dangers of this nature attendant on every gospel-*truth;* since there is none that may not be perverted by some, or that may not give offence to others; but in the case of anything which plainly appears *to be* gospel-truth, this danger must be braved; we *must* preach God's Word as we have received it, and trust in Him to prosper and defend it. But it is not so, in the case of doctrines which (whether true or not) are not plainly declared in Scripture. The dangers to which any *such* doctrines may lead, are *needlessly* and wantonly incurred; and those who preach them are answerable for the results. If the speculations of human ingenuity be mingled with the revealed Word of God, even though the opinions maintained be true, some may be misled, and others unnecessarily disgusted; Christianity may be loaded (as Dr. Paley expresses himself respecting transubstantiation) with "a weight that sinks it;" and the mischiefs ensuing will be justly imputable to the rashness of those who give occasion to them.

Let Christians, then, be taught to rejoice indeed in their high privileges, as the "Called," and "Elect," and "Peculiar People of God;" but let them be taught also, while they offer up their thanks for his unmerited mercies, to consider their own diligence and care as indispensable, not only to their attainment of the offered blessings, but also to their escape from an aggravated condemnation,—for "provoking and grieving Him, who had done so great things for them," "as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness." Let them be told to trust indeed firmly in the aid

[1] See Note B, at the end of this Essay.

and guidance of God's Holy Spirit, which will conduct those who earnestly seek it, and walk according to it, through the perils of the Wilderness of this world, to the glories of their promised inheritance; but let them learn from the rebellious Israelites, that He will not force them to enter into that good land, but will even exclude from it those who refuse to hearken to Him. Wherefore, "let him that thinketh he standeth *take heed* lest he fall." God is indeed "faithful who hath promised;" but He requires us also to be faithful to ourselves; and He has taught us, both by direct precepts and by examples, that if we harden our hearts, and will not hear his voice, we shall not "enter into his rest."

NOTES TO ESSAY III.

NOTE A, page 68.

I HAVE spoken of the Augustinian and Calvinistic theory of Decrees, as including absolute Election and Reprobation, because Calvin himself, and the rest of the principal writers of that school, regard them (and I cannot but think quite reasonably) as altogether inseparable. Indeed, Calvin expressly opposes as futile the attempt made by some to draw a distinction. "Many," says he, "as if wishing to remove odium from God, while they admit *election*, yet deny *reprobation;* but in this they speak ignorantly and childishly; since election itself could not be maintained except as contrasted with reprobation. God is said to set apart those whom He adopts as children, for salvation. Those therefore whom He passes by, He condemns; and that, for no cause whatever, except that He chuses to exclude them from the inheritance which He predestinates for his children." And again, shortly after, he says, "Whence comes it that so many nations, with their infant children, should be sentenced irremediably to eternal death, by the fall of Adam, except that such was God's will?" * * * "The Decree is, I confess, a horrible one," &c.[1]

There are, however—as Calvin intimates there were in his time—persons who profess to hold the doctrine of absolute Election in the sense I have been speaking of, and yet to reject that of Reprobation. And if they offer any explanation of the mode in which they

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[1] "Multi quidem, ac si invidiam a Deo repellere vellent, *electionem* ita fatentur ut negent quenquam *reprobari*. Sed insciţè nimis et pueriliter, quando ipsa electio nisi reprobationi opposita non staret. Dicitur segregare Deus quos adoptat in salutem . . . Quos ergo Deus præterit, reprobat: neque aliâ de causâ nisi quod ab hereditate quam filiis suis prædestinat, illos vult excludere." *Inst.* L. iii. C. xxiii. § 1. . . . . "Unde factum est, ut tot gentes, una cum liberis eorum infantibus, æternæ morti involveret lapsus Adæ absque remedio, nisi quia Deo ita visum est? Hic obmutescere oportet tam dicaces alioqui linguas. *Decretum* quidem *horribile* fateor: inficiari tamen nemo poterit quin præsciverit Deus quem exitum esset habiturus homo, antequam ipsum conderet, et ideo præsciverit, quia decreto suo sic ordinarat." Calvin *Instit.* L. iii. c. xxiii. § 7. How far from having attained to this doctrine, or forming any notion of it, must have been those disciples who were present when our Lord "beheld the City and WEPT OVER IT!"

teach the one so as not to imply the other (as Baxter appears to have done) they are entitled to a respectful hearing; or, even, if they offer no explanation, still, if they solemnly profess that they hold this, and not that, we are bound not to impute to any one opinions which he distinctly disavows.

But it cannot be conceded that a man does not *teach*—whatever may be his own *belief*—anything which is *plainly implied* in what he says, on the ground of his merely avoiding an express statement of it. A jury which finds a verdict "*for the Plaintiff*," does find a verdict "*against the Defendant*," though they may not use those words. A philosopher who maintains—as some do—that the earth is the *only* planet that is *inhabited*, is certainly maintaining that the other planets are *un*inhabited, whether he makes particular mention of them or not. Suppose a citizen of one of the Slave-States to tell us, "by the laws of our State, all freemen, and freemen alone, are admissible as witnesses; but as for the *exclusion* of the testimony of slaves, our laws make no mention of that:" we should consider him (if we could suppose him to be speaking seriously) as resorting to a disingenuous, though a very absurd, subterfuge.

So also, to teach that it is a portion of the Gospel-revelation that by an eternal decree certain persons are absolutely and infallibly predestined to salvation, and that *they only* will obtain it, is to teach that, by that very decree, all others are excluded. And it signifies nothing whether the word used be "reprobation," or "preterition," or "non-election," or any other, or none at all. The mere abstinence from the employment of this or that term, makes no difference as to the doctrine taught, if that doctrine be so plainly implied that it is hardly possible for any man of plain common sense to overlook it.

If any one is convinced that the Scriptures do reveal certain doctrines, of which one portion is designed for none but the most learned theologians and farthest advanced Christians, and ought to be kept back from the multitude[1], he should not so speak as by im-

[1] "You will reap much improvement from the view of predestination in its full extent if your eyes are able steadfastly to look *at all which God has made known* concerning it. But if your spiritual sight is weak, forego the inquiry as far as Reprobation is concerned, and be content to *know but in part*." Toplady on *Predestination*. Preface, p. viii. It is not easy to see how this suggestion is to be acted on. If indeed it had been recommended to a *preacher* to *conceal* from those of "weak sight" a portion of the Gospel-revelation, this would have been at least an intelligible and consistent application of the system of "Economy" or "Reserve." But one does not see how a man can practise this reserve on *himself*. It is in vain to say "be content to know but in part, and not to know this particular doctrine, since it alarms and shocks you precisely *because* you do know it, and do believe it to be a part of what God has made known."

plication to convey that doctrine to all, and plead that he does not teach it because he does not expressly *name* it. This would be to attempt, but feebly and ineffectually, the system (recommended by some of the ancient Fathers, and by the Writers of the Oxford Tracts) of "double-doctrine" and "reserve[1]." And it would be similar to the supposed case, just above, in reference to slave-testimony.

But any one, again, who thinks himself bound to declare openly, to all, the Gospel-revelation, and yet uses language which will be understood by at least ninety-nine in a hundred as implying what he himself holds to be *no* part of the Gospel-revelation, is manifestly bound so to explain himself as to enable them to escape such conclusions[2].

I wish it, then, to be distinctly understood, (1) that I do not impute to any one opinions which he disclaims, nor am discussing any question as to what is inwardly *believed* by each, but only, as to what is—whether directly or obliquely—*taught*; and (2) that I purposely abstain, throughout, from entering on the question as to what is *absolutely true*; inquiring only what is or is not to be received and taught as a portion of *revealed-gospel-truth*. For, no metaphysical dogma, however sound, and capable of philosophical proof, ought to be taught as a portion of *revealed* truth, if it shall appear that the passages of Scripture that are supposed to declare it, relate in reality to a different matter.

"I would wish it to be remembered," says Archbishop Sumner, "that I do not desire to argue against predestination as believed in the closet, but as taught from the pulpit."

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[1] See Dr. West's Discourse on *Reserve*.

[2] "Without doubt," [says Whitefield, vol. iv. p. 58.] "the doctrine of Election and Reprobation must stand or fall together."

"You are greatly mistaken," [says Calvin, *Christophoro Liberteto*, Col. 142,] "if you think the eternal counsel of God can be so divided as that it has so chosen some for salvation, as not to have devoted any to destruction. For if He has elected some, it follows necessarily that all are not elected. Now what more can we say of these except that they are left to perish? There must be therefore a mutual relation between the Elected and the Reprobated."

NOTE B, page 96.

IT is worth while here to remark, that there is a principle of great importance to be kept in mind in the interpretation of any Document (such as the 39 Articles) emanating from a Synod or Assembly of any kind,—a principle which is hardly ever adverted to by commentators. I have formerly delineated this principle as follows:—

"It is usual, and not unreasonable, to pay more Deference—other points being equal—to the decisions of a *Council*, or *Assembly* of any kind, (embodied in a Manifesto, Act of Parliament, Speech from the Throne, Report, Set of Articles, &c.,) than to those of an individual, equal, or even superior to any Member of such Assembly. But in one point,—and it is a very important one, though usually overlooked,—this rule is subject to something of an exception; which may be thus stated: in any composition of an individual who is deemed worthy of respect, we presume that whatever he says must have *some* meaning,—must tend towards *some* object which could not be equally accomplished by *erasing* the whole passage. He is expected never to lay down a rule, and then add exceptions, nearly, or altogether coextensive with it; nor in any way to have so modified and explained away some assertion, that each portion of a passage shall be virtually neutralized by the other. Now if we interpret in this way any *joint*-production of several persons, we shall often be led into mistakes. For, those who have had experience as members of any deliberative Assembly, know by that experience (what indeed any one might conjecture) how much *compromise* will usually take place between conflicting opinions, and what will naturally thence result. One person, *e.g.* will urge the insertion of something, which another disapproves; and the result will usually be, after much debate, something of what is popularly called "splitting the difference:" the insertion will be made, but accompanied with such limitations and modifications as nearly to nullify it. A fence will be erected in compliance with one party, and a *gap* will be left in it, to gratify another. And again, there will often be, in some document of this class, a total *silence* on some point whereon, perhaps, most of the Assembly would have preferred giving a decision, but could not agree *what* decision it should be."

Our XVIIth Article is a striking exemplification of what has been said; for it contains modifications and limitations, in one part, of what is laid down in another, such as go near to neutralize the one by the other.

It begins by stating the doctrine of Predestination in a form which certainly may be, and we know often has been, understood in

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the Calvinistic sense; and then it proceeds to point out the danger of dwelling on that doctrine, if so understood, before curious and carnal persons; of whom one may presume there will usually be some, in any congregation or mixed company; so that such a doctrine is seldom if ever to be publicly set forth. Next, it cautions us against taking the divine promises otherwise than as they are "*generally* (generaliter) set forth in Scripture;" that is, as made to *classes* of men,—those of such and such a *description*, and not to *individuals*. We are not, in short, to pronounce this or that man one of the Elect (in the Calvinistic sense), except so far as we may judge from the kind of character he manifests. And lastly, we are warned, in our own conduct, not to vindicate any act as conformable to God's Will, on the ground that whatever takes place must have been decreed by Him; but are to consider conformity to his *Will* as consisting in obedience to his *injunctions*.

If, then—some may say—this doctrine is (1) not to be *publicly set forth*, nor (2) applied in our *judgment of any individual*, nor (3) applied in our *own conduct*, why need it have been at all mentioned?

As for the comfort enjoyed from the "godly consideration" of it, by those who "feel within themselves the workings of God's Holy Spirit," &c., it would be most unreasonable to suppose that this cannot be *equally* enjoyed by those who do *not* hold predestinarian views, but who not the less fully trust in and love their Redeemer, and "keep his saying."

But the Article is manifestly the result of a compromise between conflicting views; one party insisting on the insertion of certain statements, which the other consented to admit, only on condition of the insertion of certain limitations and cautions, to guard against the dangers that might attend the reception of the doctrine in a sense of which the former passage is capable.

ESSAY IV.

ON PERSEVERANCE AND ASSURANCE.

The same Apostle principally appealed to in support of the doctrines of the final perseverance of the Elect, and their full assurance of salvation.

§ 1 THERE are many passages in the Apostle Paul's writings in which he expresses his assured expectation of the final success of his converts in attaining the Gospel-promises: for instance, "Being *confident* of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ;" *i.e.* that at his last coming to judge the world, they will be numbered among the inheritors of immortal happiness with Him. It is in a similar tone that he addresses the Corinthians in the beginning of his first Epistle to them: "Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also *confirm you unto the end*, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Indeed, there is hardly any one of his Epistles[1] in which he does not express the same exulting anticipation of eternal life awaiting his beloved on earth: the gratitude and joy which he consequently feels on their behalf, are scarcely ever left unmentioned.

Passages of this description are appealed to as establishing the doctrine of "final Perseverance" and "Assurance;" that is, of the impossibility of ultimate failure, to those who are once truly elected of God; and the complete conviction which such persons may (or must) attain, on earth, of their own safety. The dangerous consequences again, apprehended by many, from these as well as other doctrines maintained on this

[1] I mean, of those addressed, not to individuals, but to the members generally, of some Church.

Apostle's authority, have accordingly but too often led them to depreciate his writings, or to regard them with suspicion and dread, and to keep them in a great degree out of sight.

That such opinions as those alluded to (as far, that is, as they *are* erroneous and mischievous) have been grounded on a misunderstanding of these writings, and may be the most effectually refuted by a fair and correct exposition of the Author's meaning, I have endeavoured to show in the preceding Essay, as far as relates to the doctrine of christian Election. Closely connected with this, and next in natural order to it, are the other doctrines just mentioned; on which, accordingly, I now propose to offer some remarks. But it will be the less necessary to dwell on them, on account of that closeness of connexion; the one question being a kind of offshoot from the other. Absolute predestination to eternal life evidently implies the physical impossibility of ultimate failure,—in short, the infallible *perseverance* of the Elect: and consequently if any one have arrived at the knowledge that *he* is one of the Elect, he cannot but have the most complete *Assurance* of his own safety. And these notions are, not without some probable grounds at least, regarded by many as pernicious in the extreme;—as naturally leading to careless and arrogant confidence,—spiritual pride,—relaxation of virtuous efforts,—and indulgence of vicious propensities. They have accordingly laboured to repel this danger by dwelling much and sedulously on the *uncertainty*, even to the last, of the state of even the best Christian; and of the *possibility*[1] of his falling even from the most confirmed state of grace and holiness.

Apprehended danger from these doctrines apt to lead to an opposite danger.

§ 2 It should be remembered, however, that we may, in our extreme caution against one danger, fall into the opposite. Presumptuous confidence, and careless security, are indeed evils to be carefully guarded against; but they are not

[1] See Appendix to *Logic*: Article, "Possible."

the *only* evils to be apprehended: despondency, and, what is more likely to occur, deadness of the affections in all that relates to religion, and a total aversion of the mind towards it, may be generated, in some persons at least, by dwelling too much and too earnestly on the chances of ultimate failure.

It should be remembered, too, that the doctrines of Perseverance in godliness, and of Assurance of salvation, in *some* sense or other, have received the full sanction of the Apostle Paul; nor would he so often and so strongly have expressed his grateful exultation in the spiritual state of his converts, and his full confidence that the "good work begun in them" would ultimately be completed, had he not considered the exhibition of these cheering and encouraging prospects, as highly edifying, and conducive to their christian progress. And I cannot but think that his example in this point has been too little attended to by some writers; who overlook the dangers on one side, while they over-rate those on the other; which at the same time they do not take the most effectual way to obviate. It is not enough that they express the fullest confidence in God's fulfilment of his promises, to all who are not wanting on *their* part. To one whose mind is disposed to serious thoughtfulness, all doubts respecting his final salvation (however well convinced he may be that if he fail of it, the fault will be his own)—doubts which must imply the apprehension of the unspeakably horrible alternative,—cannot but suggest (in proportion as they prevail) the *wish* that Christianity were untrue: that this life were the whole of his existence, rather than that the remotest risk of such an alternative should be incurred.

[1] It is to be observed, that when I speak of the horror of being in any *doubt*, or of apprehending any *risk*—contemplating any *chance*, of this or that evil, &c., I mean, *absolute*,—not hypothetical or *conditional*—risk,—possibility—probability, &c., for this latter does not occasion any uneasiness. A man is shocked, for instance, at the idea of the remotest risk of being overwhelmed in the sea, or of perishing with hunger; but he knows that when walking on the sea-shore, he would be probably overwhelmed, *if* he should stay there till the tide came up; and that he would be starved *if* he should refuse to take the food that is before him: but this (as it may be called) *hypothetical* danger, gives him no uneasiness at all.

And a wish of this kind is utterly at variance with such a state of mind, as, according to Paul, the Christian's ought to be. For it must not be imagined that a *wish* relative to something which (as in the present case) does not at all *depend* on our choice, must, therefore, be wholly inoperative and unimportant. No man's wishes can indeed make a religion false; they may even not cause him to disbelieve it; but they may yet very easily lead him (without any deliberate design) habitually to withdraw his thoughts from a painfully alarming subject. There is a propensity in the human mind, (which, however unreasonable and absurd, is instinctive, and almost unavoidable) to turn away, insensibly more and more, from the contemplation of that which is unpleasant. Nor will such feelings of dread, distaste, and aversion, as have been alluded to, be necessarily confined (as at first sight one might suppose) to men who are knowingly leading such a life as can afford them little or no just ground of hope in the Gospel-promises. For, it should be remembered, that the apprehension of *suffering* is so incomparably more keen than the anticipation of gratification,—so faint and feeble are our conceptions of happiness, compared with those of misery,—that the least admixture of a dread of any very terrible evil, will (when really impressed on the mind) more than counterbalance a far greater amount of favourable hopes; and, consequently, to a thoughtful mind, the idea of certain annihilation would appear far preferable to the remotest chance of endless misery.

Now it is with those of a thoughtful turn that we are concerned in the present question. As for the great mass of the careless and worldly, they are, indeed, for the most part, far too confident of salvation: but *their* confidence commonly results from a vague, general, unweighed notion of God's mercy; not, from any predestinarian persuasion of their being selected from the rest of mankind, and ordained to persevere in holiness, under the constant guidance of the divine Spirit. *They* need, indeed, to be, if possible, alarmed and filled with apprehension: but it is a far different kind of alarm *they* need, from

that of which we have been speaking. They need to be warned of the dangers attendant on a *careless*, not on an *active and zealous* christian life; of the danger, not of falling *from* a state of grace, but of never striving to be *in* such a state; of the danger of losing heaven, not by *turning* from the service of God, but by not turning from the service of sin. *Their* false security arises, not from their dwelling, with too confident expectation, on the glories of a better world, but from their thinking too little, or not at all, of any world but this. Let such be alarmed, by all means possible, into a just sense of the ruin to which they are hastening by taking no pains to lead a christian life; and to urge *such* a ground of alarm will have no tendency to dishearten those who are conscious of an earnest desire and endeavour to live to God. And the more confidence is expressed of the final success of those who will come to Christ, and set themselves to work out their own salvation, the more will the sinner be encouraged to begin in earnest, and pursue with vigour, the great work of reformation.

Mode in which both dangers are to be avoided.

§ 3 But is there, then, it may be asked, no "fear and trembling" to be felt by all men in working out their salvation? Can any man be exempt from all danger of excessive and presumptuous confidence? Undoubtedly such a danger is always, and by every one, to be sedulously guarded against; but it will be best guarded against, not by seeking to lower the Christian's hopes, but by connecting his confidence with his own unremitting *efforts;* by striving to establish in his thoughts an inseparable combination between the idea of the happiness he looks forward to, and that of the requisite exertions on his part. The fullest confidence of attaining any object, if the attainment of it be still regarded as dependent on our own *endeavours,* and if that confidence be grounded on a firm resolution to *use* those endeavours, can never lead to negligence and inactivity[1].

[1] See Note A. at the end of this Essay.

The Christian who is earnestly striving to be led by the Holy Spirit, and to "grow in grace" daily, must not be told indeed that he cannot turn aside from the right path *if he would;* that it is *out of his power* to fall into a life of sin: but *that* "fear and trembling" which I conceive Paul to have intended,—the conviction, namely, that our care and diligence are never to be laid aside even to the end,—will not lessen such confidence as proceeds on the full determination to *retain* that diligent care; nor will it dash with any mixture of gloomy apprehensions the joyful anticipations with which such a Christian looks forward to a future life.

And since this inspiriting confidence is evidently calculated to produce a good *practical* effect, hence it is perhaps that some who hold those notions relative to predestination and election which were adverted to in the last Essay, are led to suppose, (contrary to what I have there maintained, § 5,) that these peculiar doctrines are practical. For, men who are not much accustomed to attentive and accurate reflection, are easily led to confound together two things perfectly distinct; viz.: 1st, a man's practical confidence, personally, as to his *own* final salvation; and 2dly, the belief that a decree has gone forth respecting *every* man, placing each in the list either of the elect who cannot fail of salvation, or of the reprobate who cannot attain it. Now these two persuasions are in nowise necessarily connected. A man may hold either of them without the other. On the one hand, any one's joyful anticipations in respect of his own case, (which *have* a practical tendency) are not, as I have above shown, any thing peculiar to the views of the Calvinistic school respecting election; on the other hand, these views have, as has also been shown, whether true or false, no practical tendency; and do not even necessarily imply any thing cheering and consolatory. For, a man's conviction that *every* one's destiny is fixed for good or for evil, can afford him no comfort, unless he is assured that his *own* is the *favourable* destiny. Many indeed do combine these two persuasions; but still they *are two*, and distinct, and may be disunited. Nor is the number

small of those who are naturally of a temper over-timid, anxious, and unreasonably desponding; such as need encouragement; but are too often denied, both by Calvinists and Arminians, such encouragement as their case calls for.

Confirmation of the view here taken, from the example of Paul's conduct, and from that of men in general.

§ 4 We may learn, not only from the Apostle's precepts relative to christian trust and "joy in the Holy Ghost," but also from his example, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, in concerns of a different nature, that *he* at least did not consider the active and circumspect employment of means, inconsistent with the most undoubting certainty as to the event; even a certainty founded on immediate precise revelation from heaven. Let any one read the account of what befell him while imprisoned at Jerusalem, and he will find him assured, by a supernatural vision, of his deliverance from the then present danger; "Be of good cheer, Paul, for thou must bear witness of me also at Rome." Yet when the designs of the conspirators to murder him came to his knowledge, he took every precaution (by sending to warn the chief captain) that prudent apprehension could suggest[1]. Again was he favoured, on the occasion of the shipwreck, with a like supernatural assurance, that he, being destined by his Master to arrive at Rome, should be saved from the peril of the sea; and moreover, that his companions should be spared also for his sake[2], and should come safe to land: yet immediately after, we find him using and suggesting every precautionary means that could have occurred to the most doubting and fearful. It was through Paul's presence of mind that the mariners were withheld from deserting the ship, and depriving the passengers of their needful aid: "Then said Paul, Except these abide in the ship, *ye cannot be saved*[3]." Was it then that he doubted, in this or in the former case, the supernatural assurance he had received? Surely not: but he regarded that very assurance as

[1] Acts xxiii. 17. [2] Acts xxvii. 22. [3] Acts xxvii. 31.

grounded on the supposition that he himself should employ all those regular means which he on his part was ready and fully resolved to employ. His exertions (which he was conscious of being determined to use) formed the hypothesis (if I may so speak) on which the divine promise proceeded; and he evidently judged it possible that he *might*, in one sense of the phrase, lose his life at Jerusalem, or in the shipwreck; *i. e.* it was in his *power* to cast away his life if he chose not to use the requisite exertions; but such a possibility as *this*, could not lead to any doubt or distressing apprehension. So also, when [1 Cor. ch. 9] he describes himself as "bringing his body into subjection, lest he should be a castaway;" he is not expressing any painful anticipation of being a castaway; because he does not at all anticipate that relaxation of his exertion and vigilance which would lead to such a result.

Nor is this a distinction too refined for any but the highest and most perfect order of minds; on the contrary, experience shows that it is within the reach of the most ordinary capacity. Nothing indeed is more common than the expression of a full conviction as to what some person's conduct will be on some particular occasion; that conviction being grounded on the supposition, that his disposition as to the point in question is fully ascertained, and that it is a matter depending on his own free choice. "Such a one is *sure*," it is said, "to act in this manner;" "he is *incapable* of doing so and so." And when we thus prophesy another's conduct, we are evidently exempt from all danger of *mistake*, supposing we are originally correct in our judgment as to the other's inclination, and as to his being free to follow that inclination; and yet, though it is in a certain sense "impossible" that he should act otherwise, so far is this anticipation of his conduct from implying that he is powerless, or under restraint, that it proceeds on the very supposition of his being left perfectly free.

And again, with respect to one's own conduct, that confidence of success necessarily diminishes exertion, is notoriously the reverse of truth. Every general seeks to inspire his

soldiers with the firmest confidence of victory; which experience proves to be the best incentive to those exertions that are requisite to ensure it. Many a man, from having been persuaded by omens, or by the predictions of astrologers, that he is *fated* to attain some great object, has, in consequence, instead of being lulled into carelessness by this belief, been excited to the most laborious and unwearied efforts, such as perhaps he would not otherwise have thought of making, for the attainment of his object.

The Macbeth of Shakspeare may be appealed to as an example even more convincing than that of any single individual of real history; if at least it be admitted that Shakspeare in his delineations of character is true to nature. For if so, they must be conformable to *general* nature; and each character must be a representative, if not of Man, universally, at least of some *class* of men. A real individual, on the contrary, may chance to be an exception to all general rules; but such a person could not be introduced into a drama without bringing censure on the poet as guilty of a departure from nature[1]. Now Macbeth is evidently both prompted in the first instance to aim at the crown, and fortified to go through with his attempt, by the prediction of the witches. We might abstractedly have supposed that he would even have been withheld, had he previously had the design, from the perpetration of a crime he abhorred, by the consideration that it must be needless, since it was infallibly decreed that he should be king. Once, and only once, the thought occurs to him, "If Chance will have me king, why Chance may crown me, without my stir;" but far from acting on this view, rational as it appears, his conduct is throughout in direct opposition to it.

It has been said, though not, I think, correctly, that, in cases of this kind, the reason why belief in Fate does not lead to inactivity, is because it is *inoperative*. It does not indeed

[1] See remarks on the "Plausible." *Elements of Rhetoric:* Part 1.

operate *in the same way* in which it would in *some* persons: there are many who would be deterred from incurring guilt or danger or toil for the sake of a kingdom, by their being fully convinced of being fated to attain it. But others are led by this very belief to use efforts which they *otherwise would not* have used. Now, surely it is not correct to call that belief inoperative which does palpably lead to results, merely because it seems to *us* strange that *such* should be the result.

The common sense, even of the simple and unlearned Christian, will be sufficient to show him, and show him practically, the distinction between that vain confidence which leads to inactivity, and a rational confidence connected with exertion; *provided a due attention is but paid* to those ambiguities of language which have been already noticed. In fact, he may be easily taught that the distinction is one which he acts upon continually in the ordinary affairs of life. When returning, for instance, from his daily labour to his home, he feels a perfect certainty (supposing his life and limbs to be spared) that he shall *reach* his home; it is an event of which, practically, he feels no more doubt than of the setting of the sun; but he does not therefore *stand still*, and neglect to use the means, because he is confident of the event; on the contrary, the very ground of his confidence is the full determination he feels to press forward towards his object.

In like manner, (it may be explained to him) it was in one sense possible, though in another sense impossible, that Paul should, even at his last trial, have deserted and renounced his Saviour; *i.e.* it was completely in his *power;* it *depended on himself* whether he would forsake his Lord, and forfeit his rich inheritance, or "lay hold on eternal life" which was just before him; so that in one sense it was true that he *might* fall and perish eternally; but he was conscious that though he had the power, he had not the will thus to apostatize; and, therefore, fully trusting in his Saviour's promises, and in a resolution supported by divine aid, he pours forth (in his second Epistle to Timothy) his exulting confidence of per-

severing even to the end. "The time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day!"

It cannot be denied, however, that there is practical danger in the tone in which some preachers dwell on such topics as the "final perseverance of God's People;"—the "triumph of faith;" which, they say, is sure, if it be a true saving faith, to prevail in the end, though God suffers his saints to fall into grievous sins, purposely, "in order to humble them[1]." All this may be, and certainly has been in some cases (whether the recorded one of Oliver Cromwell be authentic or not[2]) interpreted to mean that if a man has been at any time satisfied from his own feelings, of being in a state of grace, he will be infallibly saved, and is not to regard any sin or course of sin, he may subsequently fall into, as endangering his final acceptance.

That this is not the meaning of many who preach in the manner I have described, I am well aware. But then, they are bound distinctly to warn "him that thinketh he standeth, to take heed lest he fall." They should explain that a saving faith can only be *known to be such*, either by the possessor of it, or by others, from its bringing forth fruits;—and that, by asserting the perseverance, or repentance and return to God, (in case of falling into sin) of all God's People, they mean, that those who fall away and do *not* return, were deceived in supposing themselves to have ever been, in this sense, God's People;—and that no man's state can be properly *judged of* but by his leading a christian or an unchristian life, or can be perfectly *known* except at the last Day.

All this, it may be said, would be but a circuitous way of

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[1] I have heard this doctrine set forth *in those very words*, in a Sermon.

[2] O. Cromwell is said to have anxiously asked, when on his death-bed, whether it were possible for the elect to fall finally; and being answered in the negative, replied, "Then I am safe; for I am certain that I *was once* in a state of grace."

stating in the form of its *converse*, the proposition, that "He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved." But this, it is evident, must be the real meaning of those who use the above-mentioned expressions without intending to teach Antinomian doctrines.

But, as was observed in the preceding Essay (§ 5) it is not from dwelling on *general* decrees, but from the application to each *individual*, or each description of individuals, of such admonitions or encouragements as suit the actual apparent condition of each,—it is from this alone that practical good results are to be hoped.

Let the careless Christian then be roused and alarmed;—let the presumptuous be warned and repressed;—but let no distressing and disheartening doubts be implanted in the breast of the zealous, though humble and timid follower of Christ: only, let his confidence be always made to rest on the supposition of his own unremitting care and earnest endeavour; while, at the same time, it is also made to rest not on his own *unaided* strength, but on the promised support of Him who "worketh in us both to will and to do." Let him be encouraged to rejoice at the bright prospect set before him; but to rejoice in the spiritual strength insured to him by the Lord, who "never faileth them that seek Him." "Rejoice," (says the Apostle, to such a Christian,) "Rejoice *in the Lord* alway, and again I say, Rejoice . . . . . being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of the Lord Jesus Christ."

NOTE TO ESSAY IV.

NOTE A, page 107.

THERE is a term applied in Scripture to persons who embraced the christian faith, for which our language affords no adequate translation. We have not in English, as there is in Greek, a *present participle passive;* and this deficiency often drives us into awkward and sometimes obscure circumlocution: thus, if τυπτομένος is rendered "one who is beaten," this might be understood to relate to what is *past*, and complete (which would be τετυμμένος); but it signifies properly, though in uncouth English, "one who is being beaten." The particular term I am now alluding to is σωζομένοι; "the Lord added to the Church daily *such as should be saved;*" τοὺς σωζομένους: (Acts ii. 47) the word rendered "such as should be saved," (a rendering which has perhaps led some readers who cannot, or do not, study the original, to suppose that absolute predestination is implied in this passage,) signifies merely "persons coming into the way of salvation," namely, by embracing Christianity.

It is to be observed, however, by the way, that there are many expressions in Scripture, which do not even imply any full conviction in the writer's mind that a particular event *will* take place, or *has* taken place, though, taken strictly, they might seem to imply this, and have, probably, been often so understood. Instances may be found, probably, in all languages, but I think they are particularly common in Greek, of the same terms being used in speaking of an object *proposed*, and of an object *attained;* a full *design* and *attempt* to do any thing, is often expressed in the same manner as if it had been actually done. Thus in the Ajax of Sophocles (to take an instance from a profane writer), Agamemnon charges Ajax with having murdered him; *i.e.* having done all that in him lay to accomplish that purpose, though his design was frustrated by extraneous impediments. Thus, Paul says of himself (as our translation expresses it in Acts xxvi. 11) that he "compelled" (*i.e. was compelling*—urged) the Christians to blaspheme; not meaning to imply that they *did* so. And, indeed, nothing is more common in most of the ancient writers, than to speak of a person's having done this or that, *i.e.* having *been doing* it—having formed the design, and actually set about it,—though the attempt was stopped. In this sense the Lord is repeatedly said to have delivered the Israelites out

of Egypt, to bring them into the land of Canaan, which He had promised to their forefathers; and yet the whole generation perished in the wilderness, through their own refusal, when summoned, to take possession of the promised land; and a considerable portion of the promised land was never occupied even by their posterity, through their own neglect to drive out the nations whose territory had been allotted to them. In this case, the positive and unqualified declarations of Scripture, not only do not imply any compulsion exercised on the Israelites, but do not even imply a foreknowledge that the events would take place; but merely that the Lord had performed *his* part, and had left it completely in their power to bring about the events in question.

So also many of the expressions of the Sacred Writers, in which they speak of the holiness of life here, and eternal life hereafter, provided by the grace of God for those whom they are addressing, not only do not relate to any absolute predestination to reward, or irresistible control of the will; but do not necessarily imply, according to a fair construction of the language, even so much as a perfect confidence in the writers, that these objects will, in fact, be attained; but merely that such is the *design* and *tendency* of the Gospel dispensation;—that God had placed these things within their reach[1].

I am not contending, be it observed, that this absolute predestination and irresistible grace may not, *in fact*, be a part of the Gospel-scheme in the divine Mind; but only that no inference to that effect can be fairly drawn from the words of the Apostles. They may be truths, but they are not revealed truths; they may belong to the Gospel-*scheme*, but not to the Gospel-*revelation*.

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[1] See the last Essay in this volume.

ESSAY V.

ON THE ABOLITION OF THE LAW.

THERE are very many passages relative to the Mosaic Law occurring in the writings of the Apostle Paul, (especially in the Epistle to the Romans, and in those to the Galatians and to the Hebrews,) whose most obvious and simple interpretations, at least, would seem to imply the entire abolition of that Law, by the establishment of the Gospel. For instance, Rom. vii. 6: "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held;" —or, according to another, and perhaps better reading, which makes no material difference, "being dead to that law wherein we were held." And these passages constitute one class of those from which such pernicious consequences have been sometimes deduced, and oftener, perhaps, apprehended, as have occasioned the writings of this Apostle to be regarded by some persons with suspicion and alarm. A few, and but a few, have openly inferred,—a greater number probably have incautiously led their hearers to infer,—from Paul's declarations relative to our justification "by faith without the deeds of the law," that the Christian is under no obligation to the practice of virtue,—nor incurs, if he be one of the Elect, any spiritual danger from the commission of sin; and the dread of this Antinomian system has occasioned others, as I have before remarked, to withdraw their own and their hearers' attention, either from the writings of this Apostle altogether, or from those parts of them which are thought to countenance such a doctrine.

The Antinomian system supposed to be favoured by Paul's declaration relative to the abolition of the Law.

§ 1. That the virtuous or vicious conduct of a Christian have nothing to do with his final salvation, and are indifferent in God's sight, has been inferred from the total abrogation, under the Gospel-scheme, of the Mosaic law; which abrogation, it is contended, the Apostle plainly declares, without any limitation or exception—any distinction between *moral*, and *ceremonial* or *civil* precepts. On the other side is urged the strenuous and repeated inculcation of moral duties, not only by the other Sacred Writers, but by Paul himself as much as any; together with his earnest and express denial of the licentious consequences which some might be disposed to infer from his doctrines: for instance, "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!" And again, "Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid!" And hence it is concluded that *that* abolition of the law which is spoken of, relates only to the *ceremonial* and *civil* precepts; and that the *moral* law remains binding on all men for ever.

But this mode of stating the case, though substantially correct, leaves a considerable difficulty unsolved: it points out indeed the inconsistency of the Antinomian scheme with one portion of the Apostle's writings; but it leaves unexplained, and, consequently, open to unfavourable suspicion, the other portion before alluded to: it fails, in short, to reconcile the Writer with himself. For, it cannot be denied that he does speak, frequently and strongly, of the termination of the Mosaic law, and of the exemption of Christians from its obligations, without ever limiting and qualifying the assertion,—without even hinting at a distinction between one part which is abrogated, and another which remains in full force. It cannot be said that he had in his mind the Ceremonial law alone[1], and was alluding merely to the abolition of that; for in the very passages in question, he makes such allusions to *sin*, as evi-

[1] See Note A. at the end of this Essay.

dently show that he had the *moral* law in his mind; as, for instance, where he says, "The law was added because of transgressions:"—"by the law was the knowledge of sin;" with many other such expressions. And it is remarkable, that even when he seems to feel himself pressed with the mischievous practical consequences which either had been, or he is sensible might be, drawn from his doctrines, he never attempts to guard against these by limiting his original assertion;—by declaring that though *part* of the law was at an end, still, part continued to be binding; but he always inculcates the necessity of moral conduct on some *different* ground: For instance, "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!" He does not then add, that a part of the Mosaic law remains in force; but urges this consideration, "How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized in Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." . . . . . "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we *should not serve sin.*" And again, "Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid! Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey? whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" . . . . . "being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." And such also is his tone in every passage relating to the same subject.

Obligations of conscience not weakened by the Christian's freedom from the Levitical law.

§ 2 Now let us but adopt the obvious interpretation of the Apostle's words, and admit the entire abrogation, according to him, of the Mosaic law; concluding that it was originally designed for the Israelites alone, and that its dominion over *them* ceased when the Gospel-system was

established: and we shall find that this concession does not go a step towards introducing the Antinomian conclusion, that moral conduct is not required for Christians. For it is evident that the natural distinctions of right and wrong, which conscience points out, must remain where they were. These distinctions, not having been introduced by the Mosaic law, cannot, it is evident, be overthrown by its removal; any more than the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, implied the destruction of the Mount Moriah whereon it was built. The Apostle does indeed speak in some passages, of the law as having been a guide and instructor in matters of morality; as where he says, "I had not known sin but by the law;" but that this must not be understood, in the fullest extent, as implying that no moral obligation could exist, or could be understood, independent of the Mosaic revelation, is evident, not only from the nature of the case, but from his own remarks in the same Epistle, relative to "the Gentiles, which have not the law," being capable of "*doing by nature* the things contained in the law . . . . their *conscience* also bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or else excusing one another;" and of their "knowing" (in cases where they committed sin) "that they who do such things are worthy of death." To say, therefore, that no part of the Jewish law is binding on Christians, is very far from leaving them at liberty to disregard all moral duties. For, in fact, the very definition of a *moral* duty, *implies* its universal obligation independent of all *enactment*. The precepts respecting sacrifices, for instance, and other ceremonial observances, we call *positive* ordinances; meaning, that the things in question became *duties because they were commanded:*—the commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself, on the contrary, we call a *moral* precept, on the very ground that this was a thing *commanded because it was right*. And it is evident, that what was right or wrong in itself before the law existed, must remain such after it is abrogated. Before the commandments to do no murder, and to honour one's parents, had been delivered from Mount Sinai, Cain was cursed for killing his brother, and Ham

for dishonouring his father; which crimes, therefore, could not cease to be such, at least, as any consequence of the abolition of that law.

Nor need it be feared, that to proclaim an exemption from the Mosaic law should leave men without any moral guide, and at a loss to distinguish right and wrong; since, after all, the light of reason is that to which every man *must* be left, in the interpretation of that very law. For Moses, it should be remembered, did not write three distinct books, one of the Ceremonial law, one of the Civil, and a third of the moral; nor does he hint at any such distinction. When, therefore, any one is told that a *part* of the Mosaic precepts are binding on us, viz. the *moral* ones, if he ask *which are* the Moral precepts, and how to distinguish them from the Ceremonial and the Civil, with which they mingled, the answer must be, that his conscience, if he consult it honestly, will determine that point. So far, consequently, from the moral precepts of the law being, to the Christian, necessary as a guide to his judgment in determining *what is* right and wrong, on the contrary this moral judgment is necessary to determine what *are* the *moral* precepts of Moses.

The study, indeed, of the moral law of Moses is profitable for instruction, and may serve to aid our judgment in some doubtful cases that may occur; provided we are careful to bear in mind all the circumstances under which each precept was delivered. For there is a presumption[1] that what was commanded or prohibited by Moses, is right or wrong in itself, *unless some reason can be assigned*, which makes our case at present different from that of the Israelites;—some circumstance of distinction, which either leaves us more at large than they, or (as is oftener the case) calls for a higher and purer moral practice from us. But to consult a code of moral precepts for *instruction*, is very different from referring to that as a *standard*, and rule of conduct.

[1] See *Elements of Rhetoric*: "Presumptions."

If the notion then that such as are not under the Mosaic law, are, on that account, exempt from all moral obligations, be rejected as utterly groundless, and if, consequently, no practical danger or absurdity be involved in the supposition of that law being fully abrogated, the conclusion that it *is* so abrogated will hardly be any longer open to doubt; being evidently the most agreeable to the Apostle's expressions in their obvious, natural and unrestrained sense[1]. And, indeed, the very Law itself indicates, on the face of it, that the whole of its precepts were intended for the Israelites exclusively; (on which supposition they cannot, of course, be, by their own authority, binding on Christians,) not only from the intermixture of civil and ceremonial precepts with moral, but from the very terms in which even these last are delivered. For instance, there cannot be any duties more clearly of universal obligation than that of the worship of the one true God alone, and that of honouring parents; yet the precepts for both of these are so delivered as to address them to the children of Israel exclusively: "I am the Lord thy God, who *brought thee out of the land of Egypt*, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt have none other gods but me." And again, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy *days may be long* in the *land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*"

The simplest and clearest way then of stating the case with respect to the present question, is, to lay down, on the one hand, that the Mosaic Law was limited both to the nation of the Israelites, and to the period before the Gospel; but, on the other hand, that the natural principles of morality, which

[1] I am inclined to believe that one reason which makes some persons reluctant to acknowledge the total abolition of the Mosaic law, is the notion that the sanctity of the "Christian Sabbath" depends on the fourth commandment, and that, consequently the reverence due to the Lord's Day would be destroyed, or impaired, by our admitting the Ten Commandments to be no longer binding. But a little reflection will satisfy any candid mind that there is no ground for any such suspicion, and that all the various opinions respecting the Lord's Day, however irreconcileable with each other, are all perfectly reconcileable with the belief of the abrogation of the Mosaic Law.—On this point I have offered some remarks in Note B, at the end of this Essay.

(among other things) it inculcates, are, from their own character, of universal obligation:—that as, on the one hand, "no christian man (as our Article expresses it) is free from the observance of those commandments which are called moral," so, on the other hand, it is not *because* they are commandments of the Mosaic Law that he is bound to obey them, but because they *are* moral. Indeed, there are numerous precepts in the laws, for instance, of Solon and Mahomet, from a conformity to which no Christian can pretend to exemption; yet, though we are bound to practise almsgiving and several other duties there enjoined, and to abstain from murder, for instance, and false-witness, which these lawgivers forbid, no one would say that a part of the Koran is binding on Christians; since their conduct is determined, not by the authority of the Koran, but by the nature of the case.

Importance of resting moral obligation on a right basis.

§ 3 The remarks, however, which have been offered, may perhaps be admitted as *just*, by some who will yet be disposed to doubt their *importance*: "the proposed statement," they may say, "of the character of a Christian's moral obligations, differs from the one opposed to it, merely *as a statement*; there is substantially no difference, as long as it is fully admitted that the Christian is not exempt from the rules of morality." But it should be remembered that the difference between an accurate and an inaccurate statement of any doctrine, and of the grounds on which it rests, is of no slight importance, if not to those who *embrace* the doctrine, at least in reference to such as are disposed to reject or to doubt it. It is giving a manifest advantage to the advocates of error, to maintain a true conclusion in such a form, and on such grounds, as leave it open to unanswerable objections. And this has been particularly the case in the present instance: for, the only shadow of probability which has ever appeared to exist on the Antinomian side, has arisen from the question having been made to turn on this point, whether the Mosaic Law be entirely abolished, or not: one who

denies that it is, cannot but find a difficulty, at least, in reconciling his position with many passages of Scripture; whereas, if we admit the premiss which the Antinomians contend for, but show how utterly unconnected it is with their extravagant conclusion;—if we show that though the Mosaic Law does not bind us, our moral obligations exist quite independent of that Law,—the monstrous position, that the moral conduct of Christians has nothing to do with their final doom, is at once exposed as totally untenable and absurd.

Speculative, less common than practical, Antinomians.

§ 4 It may be thought, however, that real decided speculative Antinomians are so rare, and, moreover, are so far beyond the reach of sober reasoning, that it is scarcely worth while to devise arguments for their refutation. And it must be admitted that the doctrines in question are not at all prevalent; a circumstance which is very remarkable, and strongly indicates their intrinsic improbability. For a system so evidently favourable to the natural indolence and sinfulness of Man, as that which makes our eternal destiny entirely independent of our moral conduct, could not have failed to become highly popular, among a large class at least, were it not utterly repugnant to Reason. A frightfully large portion of the world are, undeniably, practical Antinomians; *i. e.* they live *as if* they did not expect to be hereafter accountable for their conduct; and yet it will be found, that in theory, very few of these adopt the Antinomian hypothesis, which would be the most effectual in quieting the conscience of the sinner: a circumstance which furnishes most powerful testimony against the truth of that hypothesis.

But however small may be the danger of the Antinomian heresy gaining ground, the right interpretation of Scripture relative to this point, is not, therefore, the less important. The opinion, that the Gospel exempts men from moral obligation, is not the error which I have had principally in view, but another, much more prevalent—that of suspecting that Paul lends some support to such an opinion; and consequently, of

depreciating the authority, or discouraging the study, of his writings. It is on this account chiefly that I have endeavoured to show, in this and two former Essays, how far this Apostle is from affording any countenance to certain doctrines, the advocates of which usually appeal to his authority.

But another, and perhaps still more important use, may be made of the view which has been now taken. The Apostle, we find, while he earnestly contends for the entire abolition of the Mosaic Law, still recognizes the authority of that moral law which is written on man's heart. This consideration not only deprives Antinomians of all shadow of support for their system, and removes the prejudice which might exist against the Apostle, but it also leads us to reflect on his method of inculcating moral duties, and on his reasons for adopting it.

Liability of men to content themselves with a literal observance of express commands.

If men are taught to regard the Mosaic Law (with the exception of the civil and ceremonial ordinances) as their appointed rule of life, they will be disposed to lower the standard of christian morality, by *contenting themselves with a literal adherence to the express commands of that Law;* or, at least, merely to enlarge that code, by the addition of such precise moral precepts as they find distinctly enacted in the New Testament. Now this was very far from being the Apostle's view of the christian life. Not only does the Gospel require a morality in many respects higher and more perfect in itself than the Law, but it places morality, universally, on higher grounds. Instead of precise *rules*, it furnishes sublime *principles* of conduct; leaving the Christian to apply these, according to his own discretion, in each case that may arise; and thus to be "a law unto himself." Gratitude for the redeeming love of God in Christ, with mingled veneration and affection for the person of our great Master[1], and an exalted emulation, leading us to tread in his steps—an ardent longing to behold his glories, and to enjoy his presence in the world to come—

[1] See Essay III. (First Series.)

with an earnest effort to prepare for that better world—love towards our brethren for his sake who died for us and them—and, above all, the thought that the Christian is a part of "the temple[1] of the Holy Ghost," who dwelleth in the Church, —even the "Spirit of Christ, without which we are none of his," a temple which we are bound to keep undefiled;—these, and such as these, are the Gospel-principles of morality, into a conformity with which the Christian is to fashion his heart and his life; and they are such principles as the Mosaic dispensation could not furnish. The Israelites, as not only living under a revelation which had but a shadow of the good things of the Gospel, but also as a dull, and gross-minded and imperfectly-civilized people, in a condition corresponding to that of childhood, were in few things left to their own moral discretion, but were furnished with precise rules in most points of conduct. These answered to the exact regulations under which children are necessarily placed, and which are gradually relaxed as they advance towards maturity; not at all on the ground that good conduct is less required of *men* than of children; but that they are expected to be more capable of regulating their own conduct by their *own* discretion, and of acting upon principle.

Principles substituted for Rules, under the Gospel dispensation.

§ 5 When, then, the Mosaic code was abolished, we find no other system of rules substituted in its place. Our Lord and his Apostles enforced such duties as were the most liable to be neglected,—corrected some prevailing errors,—gave some particular directions which particular occasions called for,—but laid down no *set of rules* for the conduct of a Christian: they laid down christian *principles* instead: they sought to implant christian *dispositions*. And this is the more remarkable, inasmuch as we may be sure, from the nature of Man, that precise regulations, even though somewhat tedious to

[1] See Bishop Hinds's *Three Temples*.

learn, and burdensome to observe, would have been highly acceptable to their converts[1]. Hardly any restraint is so irksome to Man (*i.e.* to "the natural Man") as to be left to his own discretion, yet still required to regulate his conduct according to certain principles, and to steer his course through the intricate channels of life, with a constant vigilant exercise of his moral judgment. It is much more agreeable to human indolence (though at first sight the contrary might be supposed) to have a complete system of laws laid down, which are to be observed according to the letter, not to the spirit; and which, as long as a man adheres to them, afford both a consolatory assurance of safety, and an unrestrained liberty as to every point not determined by them; than to be called upon for incessant watchfulness,—careful and candid self-examination,—and studious cultivation of certain moral dispositions.

Tendency to prefer precise injunctions, to watchful self-government.

Accordingly, most, if not all systems of Man's devising (whether corruptions of Christianity, or built on any other foundation) will be found, even in what appear their most rigid enactments, to be accommodated to this tendency of the human heart. When Mahomet, for instance, enjoined on his disciples a strict fast during a certain period, and an entire abstinence from wine and from games of chance, and the devotion of a precise portion of their property to the poor, leaving them at liberty, generally, to follow their own sensual and worldly inclinations, he imposed a far less severe task on them than if he had required them constantly to control their appetites and passions, to repress covetousness, and to be uniformly temperate, charitable, and heavenly-minded. And had Paul been (as a false teacher always will be) disposed to comply with the expectations and wishes which his disciples would

[1] If the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, had been three times as long, and had consisted, not, as it does, of a delineation of christian dispositions, but of a catalogue of minute directions for particular cases, it would doubtless have been more satisfactory to the hearers. But for some further remarks on our Lord's mode of conveying moral instruction, see Essay VIII.

naturally form, he would doubtless have referred them to some part of the Mosaic Law as their standard of morality, or would have substituted some other system of rules in its place. Indeed, there is a strong reason to think, (especially from what we find in 1st Corinthians) that something of this nature had actually been desired of him. He seems to have been applied to for more precise rules than he was willing to give; particularly as to the lawfulness of going to idol-feasts, and as to several points relative to marriage and celibacy: concerning which, and other matters, he gives briefly such directions as the occasion rendered indispensable; but breaks off into exhortations to "use this world as not abusing it;" and speedily recurs to the general description of the christian character, and the inculcation of christian principles. He will not be induced to enter into minute details of things forbidden, and permitted, —enjoined, and dispensed with; and even when most occupied in repelling the suspicion that Gospel-liberty exempts the Christian from moral obligation, instead of retaining or framing anew any system of prohibitions and injunctions, he urges upon his hearers the very consideration of their being exempt from any such childish trammels, as a reason for their aiming at a more perfect holiness of life, on purer and more generous motives: "Sin," he says, "shall not have dominion over you; for *ye are not under the Law, but under grace:*" and he perpetually incites them to walk "worthy of their vocation," on the ground of their being "bought with a price," and bound to "live unto Him who died for them;"—as "risen with Christ" to a new life of holiness,—exhorted to "set their affection on things above, not on things on the earth;"—as "living sacrifices" to God;—as "the temple of the Holy Ghost," called upon to keep God's dwelling-place undefiled, and to abound in all "the fruits of the Spirit;"—and as "being delivered from the Law, that we should serve in newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

He who seeks then (as many are disposed to do), either in the Old Testament or in the New, for a precise code of laws

by which to regulate his conduct, mistakes the character of our religion. It is indeed an error, and a ruinous one, to think that we may "continue in sin, because we are not under the law but under grace:" but it is also an error, and a far commoner one, to inquire of the Scriptures in each case that may occur, what we are strictly bound to do or to abstain from, and to feel secure as long as we transgress no distinct commandment. But he who seeks with sincerity for christian *principles* will not fail to find them. If we endeavour, through the aid of the Holy Spirit, to trace on our own heart the delineation of the christian character which the Scriptures present, and to conform all our actions, and words, and thoughts, to that character, our heavenly Teacher will enable us to "have a right judgment in all things;" and we shall be "led by the Spirit" of Christ to follow *his* steps, and to "purify ourselves even as He is pure;" that "when He shall appear, we may be made like unto Him, and may behold Him as He is."

NOTES TO ESSAY V.

Note A, p. 118.

It appears plainly from the Acts and from the Epistles, that the Jewish Christians continued to adhere to the observances and rules of the Levitical Law, as national customs; and they did so down to the time, probably, of the taking of Jerusalem and final overthrow of the Jewish polity. [See Acts xviii. 18, and xxi. 24.]

To some it has appeared a difficulty to understand why the Apostle Paul in particular, should have not merely allowed this, but apparently even made a point of it, while at the same time, so far from insisting on the Gentile-converts observing the Ceremonial Law, he earnestly protested against their doing so. To them he declared that "if they were circumcised, (denoting, I conceive, by that word, the observance, generally, of the Ceremonial Law) Christ profited them nothing; while, on the other hand, he himself made an open display of his strict compliance with the customs and observances of his People.

Some might at first sight be led to expect that the principle he lays down, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," would have led him to disregard altogether the whole question respecting the Ceremonial Law, and to leave all men to their own judgment or inclination.

But on more attentive reflection we shall perceive the admirable wisdom of his procedure, and its exact conformity with the above principle. The ceremonial observances of the Law being a matter of perfect indifference as far as the Gospel is concerned,—neither a part of it, nor contrary to it—the only way of practically complying with this principle, was, that, in respect of such observances, every one should *remain just as he had been before*; neither adopting nor discontinuing, on becoming a Christian, national customs which Christianity neither enjoins nor forbids:—should "continue (as the Apostle expresses it) in his vocation wherein he was called." [See Hinds's *History of the Rise of Christianity.*]

If those who had been accustomed, for instance, to eat all kinds of meats, had *begun*, on becoming Christians, to abstain from swine's flesh, &c., this would have implied that that abstinence, and other

such observances, were regarded by them as a part of Christianity:—it would have implied their attributing some justifying efficacy to these "works of the Law." And the Apostle reprobates accordingly such an error as most pernicious and unchristian; saying that he who seeks this justification is "fallen from grace," (viz. the grace of the Gospel) "and that Christ is become of none effect to him." But if again any one who was a Jew by nation, had departed from their customs on becoming a Christian, he would have implied a belief that those national customs were something *contrary* to Christianity;—that there was some christian virtue in the *opposite* customs. Now this would have been no less an error than the other; for the eating, for instance, of swine's flesh, was no more a part of Christianity than the abstaining from it.

And there was the more need, it may be added, to guard against the latter of these two errors, on account of the prevalence, at that time, of the heresy of the Gnostics, who taught that the Mosaic Law was not of divine origin, but devised either by an evil, or by an inferior and fallible Being (the *Demiourgos*), and therefore deserving of abhorrence or contempt.

When indeed the city and temple had been finally destroyed by the Romans, and the People dispersed, then, and from thenceforward down to the present day, there was no longer the same reason for converted Jews to adhere to those observances which could no longer be regarded as *national* customs, (the national Polity being entirely subverted,) but rather as badges of a *religious* persuasion. But during the subsistence of that Polity, the example and the advice of the Apostles tended to leave all Christians, Jew and Gentile, each "in his vocation wherein he was called;" neither discontinuing, nor adopting, any customs that were, as far as regards Christianity, matters of perfect indifference.

The most anxious care was taken, and the most admirable wisdom evinced, in guarding men against mixing up with Gospel-truth, any thing—no matter what—that is no part of it; and in warning them of the several superstitions, which, though seemingly opposite, were essentially the same.

Note B, page 122.

Several different opinions are to be met with as to the ground on which the observance of the Lord's Day should be maintained; none of which however,—though they cannot all be correct,—are in reality at variance with what has been said respecting the abrogation of the Levitical Law.

In the former editions I entered into an examination of these several opinions, and a defence of the one which appears to me the best founded; and was thus led into a discussion, not, I trust, unprofitable, but longer than I had originally designed, or than was perhaps warranted by the degree of connexion it has with the immediate subject of the Vth Essay. That dissertation being now separately published under the title of *Thoughts on the Sabbath*, I have judged it best to refer my readers to it, for a fuller examination of the several questions that have been raised; confining the present Note chiefly to the one point more immediately relating to the subject now before us, viz. that (as has been already said) none of the prevailing opinions, however irreconcileable with each other, are necessarily at variance with the doctrine, that the obligations of the Levitical Law are at an end.

The several opinions respecting the grounds of the observance of the Lord's day may be classed under four heads:

i. Some hold that the Lord's Day is essentially a christian festival, observed in conformity with the practice of the Apostles and of their followers in every christian Church from their time downwards: that it agrees with the Jewish Sabbath, only, inasmuch as it is observed on one day in every seven, agreeably to the division of time into weeks, derived from the Jews, the nation in which Christianity originated: but that it differs from the Jewish Sabbath in being observed on a different day of the week,—on a different authority—in a different manner,—and in commemoration of a different event[1], the resurrection of the Lord Jesus on the first day of the week.

ii. Some hold that the Lord's Day is observed on the authority, not of the Fourth Commandment, but of a precept delivered to all mankind at the Creation, and which is alluded to in the beginning of Genesis.

iii. The observance of Sunday as a christian Sabbath is by some persons derived from the Mosaic Law, on the ground of its being one of the *moral* precepts of that Law.

iv. Lastly, some maintain that the Fourth Commandment, as a *positive* precept, is binding on Christians; but that the duties and obligations pertaining originally to the Seventh day were transferred by the authority of the Apostles to the First day;—in short, that they changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday.

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[1] The universal observance among Christians in distant ages and countries, and differing in so many points of doctrine and practice, of some christian Festivals, such as Christmas Day, Good Friday, and the Lord's Day, is in many points of view a most interesting fact.

Now each of these different opinions will be found on reflection to be perfectly reconcileable with what I have maintained relative to the abrogation of the Mosaic Law.

1. With respect to the first of these opinions this is obvious. A festival peculiarly and exclusively christian, cannot be in any way affected,—any more than the ordinance of the Lord's Supper,—by the abolition of the Law of Moses.

2. The same may be said of the second of the opinions noticed. A command delivered at the Creation to the whole Human Race, cannot be affected by the abolition of a Law, delivered, many ages afterwards, to the one Nation of Israel.

3. A *moral* precept again, must, by its own character—*because it is* a moral precept—be binding on all men in every age and country independent of any enactment.

4. And those who hold that the obligations of the Sabbath were transferred by the Apostles from Saturday to Sunday,—though their doctrine is extremely liable to be so understood as to imply that the Mosaic Law is not abrogated—yet may perceive on attentive reflection that this conclusion does not necessarily follow. For this (supposed) transfer of the Sabbath by the Apostles would plainly amount to a *re-enactment* by the divine authority of those Apostles; so that the christian Sabbath, being thus made to depend on *their* command, cannot be affected by the abrogation of the Levitical Law. We all know that when (in secular matters) some law is repealed by a subsequent Act, which declares at the same time that such and such a clause of the former law shall, under certain modifications, continue in force, then, the clause so modified, is binding by virtue of the very Act which repealed the original law. Any alteration therefore made by the Apostles in the Jewish Sabbath (viz. as to the day, and the mode, of the observance) plainly amounts to an *institution* by *them* of the christian Sabbath.

Now the authority of an apostolical institution no one can consider as weakened by the abrogation of the Mosaic Law.

The doctrine in question however,—though the above is, I think, the fairest way of considering it,—yet is liable (as has been just observed) to be so understood—and, I believe, often is so understood—as to nullify all that I have urged respecting the entire abrogation of the Mosaic Law, and to establish a principle which, if consistently followed out, would go to subject Christians to all the obligations of that Law.

I. The first of the opinions alluded to,—that which places the observance of the Lord's Day wholly on a christian foundation,—has a strong presumption in its favour from its general prevalence among Christians, even those most widely separated from each other, not

only in Age and Country, but also in their opinions and practices in several other points. With scarcely any exception but that of a portion—certainly a considerable portion—of the inhabitants of these Islands (and of their American descendants) for about the last two centuries, the opinion I now advert to has been the prevailing one throughout the whole christian world in every Age and Country. This does not indeed amount to more than a very strong presumption of the soundness of the doctrine: but that it should have been represented as not only unsound, but *novel* and *singular*, is quite unaccountable.

Of the later divines who have taken this view, the best known is Dr. Paley; whose Moral Philosophy is in the hands of almost every educated person in the empire. Of our earlier divines,—the Reformers of our Church and those who lived near their times—there were scarcely any who took any other view than that I am now adverting to; which indeed was in those days so little disputed, that most of those writers implied, by their silence on the subject, or their slight and incidental allusions to it, that they did not consider the doctrine as requiring to be defended, or even formally stated. For example, throughout the WHOLE OF OUR LITURGY AND RUBRIC the word *Sabbath* never once occurs. Our Reformers, there is every reason to believe, concurred in taking the same view of the obligation of the Fourth Commandment as is set forth in the Catechism extant under the name of Archbishop Cranmer, published in the beginning of the reign of Edward the Sixth: "The Jews, in the Old Testament, were commanded to keep the Sabbath Day; and they observed it every Seventh Day, called the Sabbat, or Satterday. But we christian men, in the New Testament are not bound to such commandments of Moses' Law," &c. &c.

The reader who would examine further the opinions on this point, of our early divines, is referred to Dr. Heylin's *History of the Sabbath*, Baxter's *Practical Works*, (p. 764,) Bishop Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium*, Bishop Sanderson's *Cases of Conscience*, Bishop Bramhall's *Dissertation*, &c.

II. In reference to the second of the opinions above noticed, which rests the obligation of observing the Lord's Day on a command given at the Creation, I so far agree with it, as to think it highly probable that some Sabbatical institution in memory of the Creation existed in the patriarchal times. It must have been indeed something less strict than the Mosaic ordinance; else the Sabbaths could not have been "a SIGN between the Lord and the People of Israel," distinguishing them from the other nations: but that some kind of observance of the Seventh Day existed prior to the Mosaic Law, is a conclusion reasonably to be drawn (though not to be insisted on as a necessary Article of Faith) from the wide diffusion

of the custom of dividing time into weeks, even among the Pagans; whose religion was a corruption of the Patriarchal. Even in the agreement of several different nations in dedicating each day of the week to some one of their false gods, some trace may be perceived of the true origin of the hebdomadal division[1].

But the question is rather speculative than practical. The precept, if any such was originally delivered, of observing the last day of the week as a sabbath in memory of the close of the Creation, never in fact *has* been observed by Christians; with the exception of a very small number, in the early Churches, of men who were tinctured with Judaism. And if a law designed to be universal and perpetual, had been delivered, God would never surely have left it to be inferred by uncertain conjecture, but would have plainly recorded it. To leave men in doubt what their obligations are, is always reckoned one of the most inexcusable blunders in legislation, and such as it would be profane to attribute to the Deity. The very notion of a *probable law*, emanating from a perfectly wise and good Being, may fairly be regarded as a contradiction in terms.

III. As for those who represent the Fourth Commandment as a part of the *moral* law, and the observance of the Lord's Day as a fulfilment of it, they appear, if I understand their meaning, (of which, however, I am not certain,) not so much to hold any peculiar *doctrine*, as to employ their *terms* in a peculiar and unusual sense; introducing needless indistinctness and perplexity by the want of a precise mode of expression. The distinction between *moral* (*i.e.* natural) precepts, and *positive* precepts, (see Essay V. § 2,) is too well established and too convenient, to be lightly departed from. It is indeed morally right to obey the just commands of a lawful superior, even in matters originally indifferent; but still we should distinguish these from things *not* originally indifferent. A Jew was bound, for instance, both to honour his parents, and also, to worship at Jerusalem: but the former was *commanded* because it was right; and the latter was right *because* it was commanded[2].

Now it is plain that the observance of one day in seven rather than one in six, or one in eight, or in ten, and the observance of the last day of the week rather than the first or the second, must be,—independently of any positive ordinance,—a matter of indifference.

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[1] It seems not unlikely that the dedication, among so many different nations, of the first day of the week to the Sun, may be a trace of the commemoration of the day on which "God said, Let there be *light*." And again, Saturn, to whom the Seventh Day was dedicated, is generally described by Pagan writers as connected with a reign of *peaceful* repose,—of universal and unbroken *rest*.

[2] See *Lessons on Morals*, L. II.

But what is usually meant, I believe, by those who reckon the observance of the Sabbath as a part of the moral (*i.e.* natural) law, is, merely that it is a moral duty to devote a certain portion of time (whether a certain *hour* in each day, or certain *days*, or certain *weeks* or *months*) to devotion and religious study; though the specification of particulars is a matter of positive enactment. In this sense, the statement is true; and it is equally true in the same sense, that the Levitical Sacrifices were,—and that the ordinance of the Eucharist is—a part of the moral law: since natural conscience teaches the duty of worshipping God; though not, the particular mode of worship.

IV. Lastly, the opinion of those who hold that the fourth commandment is binding on Christians, but that the Sabbath was transferred by the Apostles from the last day of the week to the first, although, as I have said, it is not, when fairly considered, at variance with the doctrine of the general abolition of the Mosaic law,—since such a transfer by apostolic authority would plainly amount to a re-enactment by the Apostles, of that particular ordinance, so modified—yet I must say that I can see no plausible grounds for the opinion[1].

The Mosaic law of the Sabbath was delivered very plainly and publicly,—with special solemnity—and with such particularity as to forbid expressly the kindling of a fire. (Exod. xxxv. 2, 3.) Any transference therefore of the ordinance from one day to another, or any other modification of it, we might have expected to find introduced with no less plainness, solemnity, and precision: and not left to be inferred from any incidental hints, or traditional interpretations. But we find not only no express enactment, or even hint, or tradition of the kind, but the very contrary. We find in the book of Acts the Sabbath continually mentioned, always as the Jewish Sabbath, and always as an ordinance regularly observed (in common with the other precepts of the Levitical law) by the Apostles and the rest of the Jewish Christians: and this, at the very time when it is plain they were actually observing the Lord's Day as a day of christian worship; assembling "the disciples on the first day of the week, to break bread," (*i. e.* to celebrate the Eucharist,) those very Gentile disciples whom Paul exhorts to "let no man judge them in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the

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[1] When Latin was the common language of the greatest part of Christendom, "Dies *Sabbati*" seems to have been the ordinary designation of Saturday; which is still so called in those official documents in our own country—such as the daily Reports of the proceedings of Parliament—in which the Latin language is retained in the dates. And accordingly Saturday is called in Italian "Sabbato," and in Spanish "Sabbado."

Sabbath-days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

We find, in short, the most ample evidence of the observance of the Lord's Day, as a christian festival, by the Apostles and their immediate converts; whose example has been followed by all christian Churches down to this day: but that in so doing they conceived themselves to be observing a precept of the Levitical law, and that they taught the doctrine of a transfer of the Sabbath from one day to another, we find not only no evidence, but every conceivable evidence to the contrary.

I am therefore much at a loss to understand how any one can really entertain a doubt on the question, who does but read the New Testament with attention, and with an unprejudiced mind; even without consulting as an interpreter, that Liturgy which is usually regarded as our Church's Commentary on the Scriptures, as far as regards the main points of christian doctrine and duty.

But many persons not generally uninquiring, or uncandid, or incompetent to reason accurately, have yet been so early accustomed to take for granted, and assent to on authority, certain particular points, that they afterwards adhere to the belief so formed, rather from association than on evidence. And some again, through the influence of a feeling which I have described in Essay I. § 5, when inculcating what they are conscientiously convinced is a duty, are so fearful of unsettling the minds (as the phrase is) of their hearers, that, rather than use any argument, which, though valid, might startle and revolt popular prejudices, they will avail themselves of such as they know will be readily admitted, though really unsound: sometimes even cautioning their hearers (as I know to have been done in respect of the present question) against reading anything on the other side.

They probably satisfy themselves with the consideration that the great point being to bring men to a right practical conclusion, it is a matter of comparatively small moment how they get at it. And it may, I am sensible, seem to many, that it is a mere speculative question, on what the observance of the christian Sabbath is made to depend, as long as all Christians are practically agreed that it shall be observed, and observed on the same day of the week,—the first,—and observed in a different manner from that prescribed to the Jews; who were forbidden, among other things, to kindle a fire, &c.

Now this practical agreement does certainly make any hostile bitterness on such a question doubly unjustifiable, and aggravates greatly the culpability of any slanderous misrepresentation of the doctrine maintained. I cannot however but consider it as practically very dangerous to admit a principle that may encourage men to take

liberties with any divine commandment which they confess to be binding on them; and to modify it according to human tradition, or any kind of human authority. And such a danger cannot but be incurred, if we teach them that the Mosaic law of the Sabbath is binding on Christians, while we also teach them that they are obeying it by observing a different day from the one which that law appoints,—in a different manner,—and in memory of a different event. And it is every way desirable that they should be taught not only, in practice, to observe the Lord's Day, but also in principle; to observe it, not as an ordinance enjoined by the Mosaic Law—which in fact it is not—nor as deriving its obligation—even if it *were* enjoined there—from a law which the Apostle assures us does not bind Christians; but on the reasonable and true grounds which I have endeavoured to point out in the foregoing pages, as a christian festival.

For a fuller elucidation of this subject than would be suitable to the present occasion, the reader is referred to the treatise already mentioned,—*Thoughts on the Sabbath*;—and also (besides the authors above cited) to Bishop Kaye's *Selections from the Works of Justin*, and to a well-written Review of the same in No. X. of the *British Critic*; to the *Remains of Bishop Copleston*, lately published; to several parts of Augustin and the other early Fathers when treating of the Decalogue: and to Calvin's *Institutes*, [lib. ii. ch. 8.] There is also an Article on the word Sabbath in the *Encyclop. Metrop.*, which may be worth consulting, as it sets forth very clearly all (perhaps more than all) that can be urged with any show of plausibility on the side which it professes to favour; and, though only a part, yet perhaps enough to satisfy an intelligent and candid reader, of the reasons on the opposite side.

ESSAY VI.

ON IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE importance of obtaining correct, and avoiding erroneous notions, respecting any point of doctrine, is not always to be measured by the intrinsic importance of the doctrine itself, or by the practical consequences *immediately* resulting from this or that view of it. No error can be considered as harmless and insignificant which tends to put a stumbling-block in the way of believers in the Gospel, and to afford to infidels or heretics the advantage of a plausible objection against its truths. The genuine and fundamental doctrines of Christianity may become liable to the scoffs of some, and to the dread or disregard of others, from their supposed connexion with such as are in fact no part of the Gospel-revelation. It then becomes a matter of importance to rectify even those mistakes which are in themselves of no moment; since we thus (to use once more the expression of Dr. Paley) "relieve Christianity of a weight that sinks it." God forbid that the Christian should deny or explain away anything that *is* a part of his faith, for the sake of moderating the hostility, or escaping the scorn, that may be directed against it; but as little is he authorized needlessly to expose his religion to that hostility or scorn, by maintaining, or allowing to be maintained, as a part of the christian revelation, any tenet (however intrinsically true) which the Scriptures do not warrant. The same authority which forbids us to "diminish aught" from the word of God, forbids us also to "add thereto."

That the Apostle Paul's authority in particular, has been appealed to in support of several conclusions which are in fact

not taught by him, I have already endeavoured to show, principally with a view to the removal of that dread or neglect of his writings which has too often been the result.

Statement of the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's transgression, and of the righteousness of Christ.

§ 1 Another doctrine, or set of doctrines rather, there is, in support of which this Apostle's authority is principally referred to, and which being (whether deservedly or not) regarded by many with suspicion and alarm, or with disgust and contempt, has thus proved a source of objection, either to the Gospel-scheme altogether, or to the teaching of Paul in particular, of which such tenets have been supposed to form a part. I allude to the doctrine of "imputed sin" and "imputed righteousness," as set forth by some writers, who represent it as the very key-stone of the christian system.

I purposely abstain from referring to any authors in particular; because the proper character of a calm inquiry after truth, is so liable to be lost in that of a controversy with some individual or party; and the discussion of any question thus becomes, though more interesting perhaps to some minds, yet less edifying; since, after all, the object ultimately proposed should be, not the confutation of this or that theologian, but the ascertainment of the genuine doctrines of our religion; which must rest, not on any merely human authority, but on that of the Holy Scriptures.

The system at present in question, as far as I have been able to collect its import, may be briefly stated thus: that when our First Parents had fallen from their state of innocence[1], they

[1] Some writers speak of Man as being, before the eating of the forbidden fruit, not merely innocent, but pure, holy, upright and altogether virtuously disposed; and as being, in that sense, "very good." An author of very high and well deserved celebrity, has used the expression (doubtless inadvertently) that "Adam in Paradise was perfect;" forgetting that to speak of a Being *becoming* prone to sin, *by* the actual *commission* of sin, is no less self contradictory than to speak of him as self created. One cannot wonder that incautious expressions like this should provoke the scoffs of the infidel, and should lead some of the weak and unthinking to reject our religion altogether, from believing that it contains manifest absurdities.

transmitted to all their posterity (over and above the proneness to sin which we are born with, and our liability to natural death,) the *guilt* also of the actual transgression committed by Adam: this being imputed to every one of his posterity: for he, it is said, being the Federal Head or representative, of the whole human species, his act is considered as theirs to all intents and purposes; and each descendant of Adam is considered by his Almighty Judge as actually guilty, from his birth, of the very sin of having eaten of the forbidden fruit; and is, for that sin, sentenced not merely to undergo natural death, but also everlasting punishment in the next world, independently of any sins committed by himself.

This is not indeed always the sense in which the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, and their consequent punishment, are spoken of. There are some who understand by the expression, merely, the forfeiture of immortality—the liability to temporal death; though it is perhaps rather an incorrect use of language, to apply the term *punishment* to the absence of that immortality which was never ours. The *human race* indeed, taken collectively, so as to *include* our First Parents, may be said to have *lost* immortal life; but each *individual* of their posterity, being born mortal, cannot, without great laxity of language, be said to be *punished* by being excluded from immortality[1].

The doctrine, however, in the sense before stated, has been often expressly maintained, and much oftener, indirectly implied, and assumed as indubitable.

Then, to relieve mankind from this sentence, and to procure for them immortal happiness in heaven, our Saviour Christ, it is said, not only in his death offered up an effectual sacrifice for the sins of the whole world,—bearing in his own person the punishment due both to the imputed transgression of Adam, and to the actual sins of men,—but also, during his abode on earth, *performed for them* those good works of perfect

[1] See a little Latin Treatise entitled *Tractatus tres*, &c.

obedience to the law, both ceremonial, civil, and moral, which are *imputed* to true believers in Him, and considered as theirs: even as the transgression of Adam is imputed to all his natural descendants. Thus, and thus only, it is said, could the evil introduced by Adam's transgression be (as far as respects the adoptive children of God) effectually repaired. For as Adam was the representative of the whole human race, so that his sin is, by imputation, made theirs, and they, all and each, thus lay under the sentence of eternal punishment, so, it was necessary that the obedience and personal holiness of Christ, who stands as the representative of his faithful servants, should be, in like manner, imputed to them, and thus give them a title to eternal happiness:—that He should, in short, not only by his death undergo the punishment due to Man from God, but also, in his life, fulfil the righteousness due to God from Man; in each instance, suffering and performing what He did, vicariously, —*for*, and in the stead of, his People; who are thence regarded as having themselves both paid the penalty of sin, and also performed perfect obedience to the divine laws; both having been accomplished by their substitute and representative. And some there are, who go so far as to maintain that as God imputes to believers the good works of Jesus Christ, and transfers to them the merit of his obedient life, so He also imputed to Jesus, at the time of his crucifixion, the actual guilt of those sins for which he suffered, and regarded him, for the time being, as the actual transgressor; "bearing our sins" not only in respect of the penalty of them, but of their intrinsic guilt, and the divine wrath[1] against it. This, however, is not, I believe, held by all who maintain the imputation of Adam's sin, and of Christ's obedience.

Some other slighter variations of statement are to be found, as might be expected, in the works of different authors; but

[1] There are many writers, who never think of reminding their readers, and, indeed, appear to have themselves gradually learnt to forget, that *wrath* is attributed to the Deity only in a figurative, not a literal sense.—See Archbishop King's Discourse on *Predestination*.

such, in the main, as I have described, is the system taught, not in abstruse theological disquisitions merely, but in several popular treatises and sermons; and taught, as the very foundation of christian faith; of which, indeed, it must, if true, form no insignificant part[1].

And it is taught by some who admit that it is not expressly stated in Scripture, but is to be deduced (by a certain process of "development") from a scheme of doctrine of which it forms a necessary part, and which does, in their view, form an essential portion of the Gospel-revelation.

That it is paradoxical,—remote from all we should naturally have expected,—and startling to our untutored feelings, cannot be questioned. This is, however, no reason why it may not be true; or why, if true, we should shrink from receiving it; since God's "ways are not as our ways;" and since, incapable as we are of estimating his counsels, it is for us, not to question, but to receive whatever He may have proposed to us. It *is* a reason, however, why we should inquire for, and expect, the more full and precise revelation on such a point. What is readily discoverable by unassisted human Reason, we must not expect to find revealed *at all* in Scripture. Such things, again, as, though not discoverable by reason, are yet comformable to its suggestions, and contain no mysterious difficulty,—of these, we may receive satisfactory assurance even in a single passage, or in a few short hints. But any doctrine which, like that now in question, is wholly at variance with every notion we should naturally be led to form, we may be sure will be revealed, if revealed at all, in the fullest and most decisive language.

The doctrine, too, which I have been considering, must, if it belong to the Gospel-scheme, be as important as it is mysterious: it must be the very key, as it were, to eternal happiness; since, according to this view, it is only through the obedience of Christ imputed to us, that we can have any

[1] This theory may be classed, I think, under the head of Bacon's *Idola Theatri*.

claim or hope to be admitted to the glories of his heavenly kingdom.

Some there are, indeed, who, though they hold the doctrines in question, yet do not hold the reception of them to be altogether essential to salvation. But unless they give some explanation of this charitable belief, they will be likely to lead others to follow out their principles to a more consistent conclusion. For if it be a truth plainly revealed in Scripture that the actual guilt of the act of our first Parents is imputed to us; and regarded by the Most High as to all intents and purposes *our* act, it seems inevitably to follow that we are bound to feel *penitent* for the sin of Adam, or else must stand convicted of *im*penitence. We are told that "if we *confess* our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Now it seems impossible (supposing the theory in question to be true) that a man can comply with this precept, who does *not* confess what must be (on that supposition) one of the greatest sins,—which God imputes to him as his,—and who does not believe in any such imputation. And if believers can be saved only through the imputation to them, as performed by themselves, of the good works performed by Christ, and if this is as clearly revealed as it is that He died for us, and that we are to trust in his redemption, then, surely, faith in each of these doctrines alike must be equally essential.

Scripture authority on which it is made to rest.

§ 2 It is not once or twice, therefore,—it is not obscurely or obliquely,—that we might expect to find Paul speaking to his converts of this imputed sin, and imputed obedience. As the foundation of salutary dread, and of consolatory hope,—as connected most intimately with every question relative to the punishments and rewards of the next world,—we might expect him to make the most explicit declarations respecting a point of such moment,—to dwell on it copiously and earnestly,—to recur to it in almost every page.

Now when we proceed to the actual examination of Scrip-

ture, do we find these most reasonable expectations confirmed? Far otherwise: it is not, perhaps, going too far, to say that the whole system is made to rest on a particular interpretation of *one* single text (Rom. v. 19), "As by one man's disobedience many[1] were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many[1] be made righteous." For though there are other passages which have been considered as alluding to and confirming the tenet in question, there is none that could, without manifest violence, be construed into an express declaration of it[2].

Interpretation of the passage appealed to.

The passage in question is one which we cannot reasonably hope to interpret aright, if we contemplate it as an insulated proposition;—if we do not take into account the general tenour of the Apostle's teaching. Now, it is most important to observe, that frequent as are his allusions (as might be expected) to the Christian's redemption, and acceptableness to God, through Christ; the reference is made, throughout, to his *death*,—to his *cross*,—to his *blood*,—to his *sufferings*,—to his *sacrifice* of Himself, as the meritorious cause of our salvation; not, to the righteousness of his life imputed to believers: the transfer of the merit of his good works. For instance, "He hath reconciled us to God, in the body of his flesh, *through death*;" "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his *blood*:" "He hath brought us nigh to God, and made Him at peace with us, through the *blood of the cross*:" "We are sanctified through the *offering of the body* of Jesus Christ once for all;"—besides numerous other passages to the same purpose.

Frequent, again, as are the allusions to the pure and perfect

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[1] οἱ πολλοὶ, the many; *i. e.* the whole mass of mankind.

[2] One may often be reminded of the satirical epigram inscribed in a Bible:

"Hic liber est in quo quærit sua dogmata quisque:
Invenit et pariter dogmata quisque sua."

holiness of our Saviour's life, we nowhere find this spoken of as imputed to Christians, and made theirs by transfer of merit; but always, as qualifying Him to be, on the one hand, an example to Christians, and on the other, both the Victim and the Priest of spotless purity;—as constituting Him the true Lamb without blemish,—"the innocent blood," which "taketh away the sin of the world," because He who offered it had no need of atonement for Himself. For instance, "how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself *without spot* to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" "Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." In these and many other such passages, in which the personal holiness of Christ is spoken of, and spoken of too in reference to our salvation, it is not said that the obedience of Christ is imputed to us, and the merit of his good works transferred to us, (which we might surely have expected to find there mentioned, had it been designed to teach such a doctrine;) but, on the contrary, it seems rather to be implied that his obedience was imputed to Himself, as necessary to qualify Him for the great sacrifice of atonement.

And the language of Scripture on this point coincides with the most sound moral judgment; which indicates that nothing short of a life of unsinning virtue could have made Him Himself, acceptable, and fit for his great office; that, in short, it behoved Him "to fulfil all righteousness," in order that He might be a spotless Victim, and an Undefiled Priest: that in *suffering* indeed an accursed death, He did more than could be required of an innocent person on his own account; and that, therefore, He died, "the just for the unjust;" but that his *being* just,—the perfect obedience of his *life*,—could not be more than requisite to constitute Him perfect as a man. I speak, of course, of his obedient life in reference to his *human* nature alone: in respect of which He always declared, "My Father is greater than I;" to speak of his *obedience*, considering Him as a divine Person, would be at least approach-

ing very near to the Arian doctrine[1]; since all *obedience* necessarily implies a superior.

Surely, then, when we read that "by the obedience of [the] one, many [the many] shall be made (or constituted,—καταστα θήσονται) righteous," the presumption is strongly in favour of such an interpretation as shall accord with the declaration that we are "justified by his *blood*." Now such an interpretation is not only allowable, but is even, I may say, suggested by the Apostle himself in another passage, in which, speaking of Christ's *death*, he uses the very corresponding word to (ὑπακοὴ) "obedience," in this place: Christ, he says, "became *obedient* (ὑπήκοος) *to death*, even the death of the cross." And again (Heb. v. 8), "though He were a Son, yet learned He *obedience* by the things which He suffered; and being *made perfect*, He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that *obey* Him." His death, indeed, is more than once referred to in this point of view; namely, as a part, and as the great and consummating act of that submissive and entire *obedience* which He rendered throughout to his Father's will. For instance, in our Lord's own words just before He suffered, "Not my will, but thine be done:" "Lo, I come to *do thy will*, O God:" "When He suffered He threatened not, but *committed* Himself to Him that judgeth righteously."

Then, with respect to the imputation of Adam's sin to his descendants, it might, as I have said, be expected that, if true, it would be frequently and fully set forth. But at any rate it could hardly fail to be mentioned on those occasions where the Apostle is occupied in proving and insisting on the universal necessity of a Redeemer, and the inevitable ruin of man-

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[1] There is, I fear in many Christians a strong habitual leaning of the mind to this view of the Scripture doctrines; though they are unconscious of it, from their having *formally* condemned Arianism, and distinctly asserted the equality of the Son and the Holy Spirit with the Father: forgetting that this is no security against a tinge being given to their ordinary course of thought on the subject,—a tendency *practically* to contemplate three distinct divine Beings, the second inferior to the first, and the third to both.—See Note A at the end of this Essay.

kind without an atoning sacrifice. Now this plainly is his object in the opening of this very Epistle (to the Romans), which is generally regarded as the most systematic of all that he wrote. What then is Paul's procedure? He dwells at large on the *actual sins* of men; he gives a copious and shocking detail of the enormities of the Gentile world, into which they had plunged in defiance of their own natural *conscience;* and then expatiates on the sins of which the Jews had been guilty, in violation of the *law* in which they trusted. How needless would all this have been for one who maintained the doctrine of imputed sin! No one, indeed, denies that men do commit actual sin; but the hypothesis I have been speaking of would have cut the argument short: on that supposition it would have been sufficient to say at once, that Adam's transgression being imputed to all his posterity, so that they are all regarded as guilty of his act, they must be, in consequence, whether sinful or innocent,—whether more or less sinful,—in their own persons,—doomed to eternal perdition, unless redeemed from this imputed guilt. Nor does the passage I have appealed to, stand alone in this respect. Numerous as are the denunciations of divine judgment against sin, all concur in making the reference not to the imputed sin of our first parents, but to the actual sins of men; none of them warrants the conclusion that any one is liable to punishment (I mean in the next world) for any one's sins but his own[1].

General drift of the Apostle in the passages which treat of the subject.

§ 3 It should be observed also, that there is an especial reason for interpreting that part of the Epistle I have been alluding to[2] by reference to other parts of Scripture: which is, that it is not the Apostle's *object*, in this place, to declare or establish the doctrine of original sin, and of

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[1] I have treated more at large on this point in Essay I. (Fourth Series.) See Note B at the end of this Essay, in which I have extracted a passage from Archbishop Sumner's *Apostolical Preaching*.

[2] Rom. v. 19.

our deliverance from its consequences by Christ our Saviour. It is plain from the context that these points are established only incidentally; the main drift of his argument being to set forth the *universality* of the redemption,—as being co-extensive with the evil introduced at the Fall, which it was designed to remedy. The Jewish converts, to whom he seems to be principally addressing himself, were disposed by their ancient national prejudices, to limit the benefits of the Messiah's Advent to their own People. The great and revolting mystery to *them*, was, "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs:" in opposition to which exclusive spirit he infers the universal redemption accomplished by Christ from the universality of that loss and corruption which He undertook to repair: "*as* in Adam *all* die, even *so* in Christ shall *all* be made alive:" "*as* by one man's disobedience many (the many, *i.e.* all the rest) were made (or constituted, κατεστάθησαν,) sinners, even so by the obedience of the one shall the many," (*i.e.* not the Jews only, but the whole race of mankind, as many as believe) "be made righteous."

Now there is no doubt that such an oblique allusion to any doctrine does not only establish it, but establish it even more decidedly than an express assertion; since it implies that it is a known and undisputed truth. But still the difference between the two cases is not the less important. We are not to look for the same full and clear *exposition* of any point of faith in those passages where it is merely alluded to incidentally, as in those wherein the object is to declare and explain it. And some passage, in which it is the direct object to reveal and inculcate the doctrine now in question, would doubtless have been appealed to by its advocates, had any such passage existed. But fundamentally important as this truth must be, if it be a truth, no portion of Scripture can be found that can even be represented as having for its immediate and primary design to declare it. The sinfulness of human nature is, indeed, abundantly set forth; but not the imputation to one man of the actual transgression committed by another;

our salvation through Christ is earnestly dwelt on; but it is "through faith in his *blood*." Nay, there is mention made of imputation and non-imputation; but not of *one* man's act or desert to *another*. God is spoken of as "not imputing to men their trespasses," (which, by the way, would amount to nothing, if He still imputed to them the trespasses of another); and we are told, "faith" (our own) "shall be imputed to us for righteousness."

And this should teach us how to interpret the passages in which we are said to be made "the righteousness of God in Christ," and He, to be "made sin for us;" viz. not that He was considered in the sight of God as actually sinful, but that He was made a "sin-offering for us; the word (ἁμαρτία) which is literally "sin," being commonly used by the Septuagint translators in the sense of a sin-offering. And again, when we are said to be made righteous through his "obedience unto death,"—and to be "made the righteousness of God in Him:" and He again is said to be "made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," it is not meant that there is an imputation to believers of the righteousness of Christ's life, as if it were theirs: any more than that the *wisdom* of Christ is imputed to them, or the *redemption* which He effected is regarded as effected by them; but that He purchased by the sacrifice of Himself, all these benefits for men; for those, *i.e.* who should by faith be admitted to be partakers of them;—that when He had been "delivered for our sins," He "rose again for our justification;" *i.e.* "ascended up on high, and received gifts for men, that the Lord God might dwell among them:" viz. that his Holy Spirit, whose temple we are, might reside in and sanctify our hearts, and *impart to us wisdom and righteousness*, to be practically displayed in our lives[1].

And since without this holy guidance our own feeble and depraved nature could never bring forth what the Apostle calls

[1] See Whitby on this subject.

"the fruits of the Spirit," nor follow the steps of Christ, this may well be called the "righteousness of Christ," or the "righteousness of God in Christ." For "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his:" "if any man keep my saying, my Father will love him, and *we* will come unto him, and make our abode in him." "Little children," says the Apostle John, "let no man deceive you; he that *doeth righteousness* is righteous, even as He is righteous." "They that are Christ's," says Paul, "have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts;" "if we live in the Spirit[1], let us also walk in the Spirit." "If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live; for, as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

And indeed our Lord's own Parable of the Marriage-feast, in which the guest is rejected who had failed to put on the "Wedding-garment," might seem sufficient, alone, to remove all doubts on the present subject. No one can doubt that the "righteousness of Christ" is here represented by the garment which (according to Oriental custom) was freely *provided* by the giver of the feast. It would be absurd for a guest, under these circumstances, to boast of the richness of his apparel: but, though properly belonging to the bountiful Master of the house, the guest was required himself to *wear* it. The purity and splendour of the robe worn by the Master himself, could not be transferred by *imputation*, to a guest who should neglect to put on that which was provided for him. The accepted guest must be himself "clothed with righteousness," though it is still "the righteousness of Christ[2]."

Again, when our Lord compares Himself to a Vine, He naturally leads us to understand that as the fruit *borne by the branches* is called the fruit *of the Vine*, because the branch "cannot bear fruit of itself," so, the righteousness practised

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[1] "*By* the Spirit" would be the more correct rendering. As the passage stands in our version it sounds like a tautology. But the sense of it plainly is, "if we have life" (*i.e.* the christian life) "by the Spirit, let us act according to his guidance."

[2] See Lectures on the *Parables*, L. III.

by his disciples is to be reckoned *his* righteousness, since they must "abide in Him;" being not only *instructed* by Him, and imitators of his *example*, but also *guided and aided* by his Spirit. He *teaches* them the way, and *shows* them the way, and *supports* them in the way. But neither here, nor anywhere else, do we hear of any such thing as *imputed fruitfulness*;—of a branch being considered as bearing fruit which is borne not by it, but by some other. He only tells us that the branches *which* "*bear fruit*" are purified that they may bear more fruit; and that those which *bear not* fruit are "taken away."

Liability of men to be biassed by the love of system.

§ 4 From the consideration then of these passages of Scripture which have been adduced, as well as of many more to the same purpose which might be appealed to if needful, I cannot but conclude that that system of imputed sin and righteousness, which I have been considering, is altogether fanciful and groundless. It has indeed at first sight a sort of compactness, coherency, and consistency of parts, which gives it, till closely scrutinized, an air of plausibility; but this very circumstance should, in any case, put us the more carefully on our guard; for there is no more common error in many departments of study, and especially in Theology, than the prevalence of a love of *system* over the love of *truth*[1]. Men are often so much captivated by the aspect of what seems to them a regular, beautiful, and well-connected theory, as to adopt it hastily, without inquiring, in the *outset*, how far it is conformable to facts, or to scriptural authority; and thus, often on one or two passages of Scripture, have built up an ingenious and consistent scheme, of which the far greater part is a tissue of their own reasonings and conjectures[2].

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1 Seduced by the *Idola Theatri* of Bacon. See Note (1), p. 143.

2 I would not be thought to appeal to our Articles, or to any other human work, as decisive on such a point. But it is worth considering by those members of our Church who regard this doctrine as the key-stone of Christianity,

No accurate and technical uniformity in the employment by the Sacred Writers of the word Justification.

The whole subject indeed of Justification has been involved in great, and, I cannot but think, needless, perplexity, by the practice formerly alluded to (Essay III.) of first affixing (which may be allowable[1]) a strict technical sense to each of the principal words that have been employed in Scripture, and then (which is not allowable) interpreting the word, whenever it is found in the Sacred Writers themselves, according to such precise definition; instead of regarding their works as popular, not scientific, and seeking for the meaning of their expressions, in each case, from the context.

Thus, in the present instance, if three or four perhaps of those who are accounted sound Divines, should be consulted as to the doctrine of Justification, it is not unlikely they would give as many different accounts of it. All would agree as to the importance of the doctrine; but some perhaps would lay down two Justifications, others, only one; and among these there would be found great discrepancies; and yet all probably would be found, in their general views of the christian scheme, to arrive at nearly the same practical results. It is hardly to be supposed indeed that there can be so much difficulty (to the

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that the Articles, though insisting on justification through Christ, make no allusion to the imputation to believers, of his good works. The expression is, "propter *meritum*," &c.; not, *merita*.

It is worth observing also that the framers of our Liturgy make no allusion to imputed righteousness in passages where it seems incredible they should have omitted it, had they held and designed to teach that doctrine. For instance, in the prayer before the consecration of the bread and wine, we find, "We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness;"—and then,—instead of adding "but in the imputed righteousness of our Saviour,"—it proceeds, "but in thy manifold and great mercies."

[1] Perhaps, however, it would have been better if, from the very first, *no* scriptural terms had been introduced into systems of theology. Some have objected to the word "Trinity" and a few others, on the ground that they are *not found in Scripture:* this appears to me their chief recommendation; since in this case all danger is effectually avoided of misinterpreting Scripture in the way I am describing. As it is, one of out best safeguards against this danger would be, to *vary* from time to time the language of our expositions of Scripture doctrines.

unlearned, impossibility) as this discrepancy would seem to imply, in ascertaining from Scripture, "what we must do to be saved." And is there not therefore ground to suspect that many Divines have been unconsciously involved in embarrassing disputes about words, from expecting in the Sacred Writers a more scientific accuracy and uniformity of language than they ever aimed at[1]?

When one of the Apostles speaks to men of the *condemnation* for sin, from which they were to seek a way to escape, he naturally uses the word δικαιωθῆναι[2], to be "justified," in the sense of *acquittal*;—their "not having their trespasses imputed to them." (Acts xiii. 38, 39. Rom. iii. 25. Rom. v. 9.) When again he alludes to the *defilement* of sin, analogous to the ceremonial impurities which, under the Levitical Law, excluded men from partaking of its sacred ordinances, he as naturally uses "justified" to signify their being accounted *clean*,—regarded as God's *holy people*, and admitted without profanation to approach Him, in the spiritual service of the new Covenant. (Rom. v. 1, 2.) When again the Jews prided themselves on their Law, as their guide to a moral and religious life, and as "justifying," that is, *making men good*, and fit to obtain heavenly rewards, he sets forth the vainness of that expectation; since, even if the Law had had the "better hope" of the Gospel,—the sanction of eternal rewards,—still, it could not justify those who had not strictly obeyed all its precepts;

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[1] See Hampden's *Bampton Lectures*. Lect. I.

[2] See A. Knox's *Remains*, [Vol. I. p. 276,] where he points out that the use of the word δικαιοσυνη by the Apostle (denoting, like the other words in συνη, a moral *habit*), instead of δικαιωσις, in those passages where he is, by some, understood to be speaking of another's righteousness, imputed to us, plainly indicates that this was not his meaning. The presumption at least is in favour of that sense of the word δικαιοσυνη, which is undoubtedly its original and strict sense: and if not invariably, at least generally, the word is employed by the Apostle so as to make that the most obvious and natural interpretation.

The coincidence in this point between Mr. Knox and myself, has led some to imagine that my notions must have been, directly or indirectly, derived from him. But this Essay was published some years before I even knew of the existence of him or any of his friends. My views were no more borrowed from him, than his from me; but both from a common source.

which Man, left to his natural strength, had never fully accomplished; (Rom. ii. 25, and vii. 22, 23,) insisting, that we are to be justified, that is, *made good men*, through faith in Christ, which admits us to a participation of his Spirit (Rom. v. 12), even the Spirit which "helpeth our infirmities," (Rom. viii. 26,) and "worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Hence he speaks of Christ as being "delivered for our sins, and *rising again* for our justification," (Rom. iv. 25, and vi. 4); that is, that when He "ascended up on high, He received gifts for men," namely, "that the Lord God might *dwell among them.*" Hence also he occasionally speaks of the "*law* of faith;" and universally contrasts, not (as many are apt to suppose) *good works* with faith, but faith with the *Mosaic law;* as leading more effectually to good works, (Rom. viii. 4, 11; 12, 13, and Tit. iii. 5, and 1 Cor. vi. 11), by obtaining for us the aid of the Holy Spirit, of which they are the fruits. The chief cause indeed of this Apostle's giving so prominent a place to the word "justification," may be found in the peculiar circumstances under which he preached; especially when addressing the Jews, and those infected with their prejudices; who were always hoping to be justified by the Law; (imperfectly as they observed it;) that is, made at least sufficiently righteous to inherit the rewards of a future life.

Evils indirectly resulting from erroneous interpretation of Scripture.

§ 5 It may be said, however, that the system which has been treated of in this Essay, is, even if unsound, not practically dangerous, and therefore, not one which needs to be refuted. That it has been held by pious and worthy men, I am well aware; nor would I contend that it had any necessary tendency to make them otherwise, and that their notions on this point were inconsistent with their religious and moral characters. But it would be rash to conclude thence, that their error, if it be one, must be altogether harmless. Nothing is harmless which may put a stumbling-block in the path of any sincere Christian: nothing is harmless that tends to give

an undue advantage to unbelievers, — to disgust some with what they are told is the orthodox faith, and to furnish others with objections against it, by inserting doctrines which the Scriptures do not warrant:—nothing is harmless that leads to a depreciation, a dread, or a neglect of the divine instructions of the Apostle Paul. And such is most remarkably the case with respect to the system I have now been considering. It is a favourite point of attack to the infidel, and the heretic; who pretend, and probably believe themselves, to have exposed to contempt the great doctrines of the Atonement and the divinity of Christ, by exposing the chimerical pretensions of doctrines which are taught in conjunction with these, and represented as parts of the same system. And in others, the too-prevailing neglect of Paul's writings, as neither intelligible, nor safe, nor a profitable study to any but theologians of the most profound learning and wisdom, is fostered, by attributing to him doctrines more likely to bewilder and mislead, than to be applicable to any practical benefit.

The doctrine which has been taught, that certain persons of pre-eminent virtue, called, in distinction from the rest of the christian world, Saints, have performed good works which not only give them a claim to eternal life, but are *more* than sufficient, and that the merit of these may be transferred to other men, who may thus as it were be virtuous by proxy, this evidently seems to go on the supposition that the works performed are in themselves some sort of advantage to the Most High Himself. For if we regard all good works as being—which is the true view—enjoined for the benefit of the doer,—in order to make us good men,—then, it is inconceivable that another person's good works can be transferred to us, and considered as ours. Thus, when a child is set by his master to write an exercise, or to draw a map, if he employs a schoolfellow to do the task for him, instead of being rewarded, he is punished; because it was in order to his own improvement, and not for the master's benefit, that the work was to be done. But, on the

other hand, if any one offers for sale to a publisher a book or a map, it matters nothing to the purchaser whether it be the seller's own work, or that of some friend who has given it to him. He only looks to the value of the work itself, with a view to his own profit.

It seems plain therefore that the notion of one person's good works being transferred to another and considered as his, must proceed on the supposition of some value in the works themselves, as if they could be a benefit to the Most High; though no one can fail to perceive the absurdity of such a notion, when plainly stated.

And the same reasoning is applicable in reference to the doctrine we have now been considering.

But if any one should ask, "Since the Most High can have no need of any one's services, or, again, of any one's *sufferings*, how can it be that the sufferings and death of Christ could procure Man's salvation, and that He should have suffered in our stead?"—if any one should ask this question, you should answer that you *do not know;* since it is a point on which Scripture gives us no explanation; and that you cannot clear up either that or any other part of the *one* great mysterious difficulty (of which this is a branch), the existence of *evil* in the universe. We know, as a fact, from the plain declarations of Scripture, that "Christ died, the just for the unjust," and that "by his stripes we are healed;" and we must suppose that if it had been possible for us to understand, and needful for us to know, the reasons *why* this was necessary, and *how* the death of Christ avails us, the Scriptures would have told us. But they do not. They merely tell us the fact. And if, again, Scripture had plainly declared that it is possible to be virtuous by proxy, and that another person's good works would be accepted by the Most High as ours, then we should have been bound to believe this, though unable to explain it. But as it is, the Scriptures tell us no such thing. We are left on this point to the light of Reason; and nothing can be more contrary to Reason than

that one man's virtue should be accounted another's,—that a barren branch of the vine should be reckoned fruitful, on account of the fruitfulness of another branch.

I would suggest also to those worthy and intelligent persons who hold the doctrine alluded to, to consider whether it does not tend rather to do away with the importance of Christ's atoning sacrifice. A man who owes a debt is required *either* to pay it, or else to undergo the *penalty* (in the East, in old times, bondage) of *non*-payment; but he is not called upon for *both*. If when a man who owed 10,000 talents was called on for payment, some friend discharged the debt *for* him by paying in his name, he would of course feel most grateful to that friend. And so he would to a friend who should consent to undergo in his stead the penalty of bondage (or whatever else it might be) for *non*-payment. But it would be quite unnecessary for any friend to do *both* of these;—to *pay* the debt, and *yet* moreover to submit also to the penalty of *non*-payment. The application to the present case is obvious. If men have Christ's righteousness imputed to them, in the sense of being considered as having themselves led that life of holy obedience which was led by Him in their stead, it would seem to follow that they are *not* sinners, and can have no need of atonement. And those who are very far from meaning to adopt or to propagate such a view, ought to be the more careful not to teach, without very clear and express Scripture warrant, any doctrine which naturally leads to such a consequence.

Mysterious, no doubt, it is, that the sacrifice of "the innocent blood" should be accepted as an atonement for sin: but in this case we know that the sacrifice was *voluntary*;—"I *lay down* my life; no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." Christ, of his own accord, offered his life as "a ransom for many." But when we are told of eternal punishment denounced against men for the actual sin of Adam, and this, not by their own *voluntary choice*, or by any act of their own, but by the absolute decree of the Almighty Judge,

our ideas of the divine justice, whether drawn from reason or from Scripture, cannot but be shocked.

When again, we find Christ spoken of as suffering for us and in our stead, so that "by his stripes we are healed," though we cannot comprehend, indeed, this act of mysterious mercy, we do comprehend that "there is now, therefore, no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus," but that his suffering *in our stead* exempts his faithful followers from suffering in their own persons. But when men are told that the righteousness of Christ's life is imputed to believers, and considered as *their* merit, they are startled at the want of correspondence of this doctrine with the former, and its apparent inconsistency with the injunctions laid upon us to "bring forth the fruits of the Spirit" unto everlasting salvation, because "God worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure," while we are also told that Christ has already fulfilled all moral obligations *in our stead.* The Antinomian system is unhappily the only one which surmounts this incongruity[1]; and its advocates accordingly have availed themselves of the advantage:—Since, say they, Christ suffered for us, and in our stead, so as to exempt *us* from suffering ourselves, by parity of reasoning, the good works which He performed,—the personal holiness He possessed,—being imputed to us, as performed for us and in our stead, must, in like manner, exempt *us* from any such performance of our own[2].

I do not however mean to contend, that the generality of those who maintain the system in question, are tainted, or are even necessarily in danger of tainting the minds of others, with

[1] Perhaps also the Romish doctrine of *purgatory* may be considered as going some way towards removing the incongruity. "Although" (a Romanist might say) "Christ suffered for our redemption, and in our stead, still we hold, that, either in the way of voluntary penances in this world, or in the flames of purgatory, the sinner must also suffer in his own person a portion of the penalty due; even as *you* hold that men must lead a virtuous life themselves, although the perfect righteousness of Christ was performed in their stead, and is imputed to them as theirs."

[2] See Whitby on this subject.

the Antinomian heresy. It is enough to say, that if they bring Paul's writings into disrepute or disuse, by attributing to him, without sufficient grounds, doctrines which appear to lead to such pernicious consequences, they are answerable for the evil thence resulting. Whenever we teach for Gospel-truths anything which Scripture does not warrant, we are answerable for the effects produced, not only on those who adopt our opinions, but also on those who dissent from them.

Let Paul, as well as the rest of the Sacred Writers, be studied with diligence and candour, and without any bias in favour of an ingenious and consistent theory, the offspring of our own speculations; let the student "prove all things, and hold fast that which is right;" and to this end let him observe the wise maxim of admitting no conclusion which is not, itself, as well as the premises it is drawn from, agreeable to the Word of God. And let the general tenour of each work in particular, and of the Scriptures altogether, be carefully attended to, instead of dwelling exclusively on detached passages: and then we may boldly and constantly maintain every doctrine which we find to be really revealed, however mysterious, or however unacceptable.

We are, in reality, not preaching the Gospel, unless we both preach the *whole* Gospel, and likewise, the Gospel alone; nor can we hope for the Apostle's consolatory trust of being "pure from the blood of all men," unless, like him, we declare to men "*all* the counsel of God," and (as a part of the christian Faith) *nothing but* "the counsel of God."

NOTE TO ESSAY VI.

NOTE A, page 147.

THAT it is possible for men to become something very near indeed to Arianism without knowing it, we have a curious instance in ecclesiastical history. In the early stages of Arianism, a confession of faith was agreed upon[1] which was satisfactory to all parties, till some time after, the Arians began to boast of their triumph, and to point out the sanction which the formula adopted gave to their doctrine; and then "the Church," says Jerome, "marvelled to find itself unexpectedly become Arian"

Something of the same kind, on a smaller scale, took place very recently among ourselves. The discovery of Milton's System of Theology startled many persons by its avowed Arianism, who had been accustomed to commend his poems for their sound theology; though they convey the very same views, stated almost as plainly as, in a poem, they could be. Numerous passages indeed may be cited from the *Paradise Lost*, which cannot be censured as heterodox, because they are little more than metrical versions of portions of *Scripture*. But such passages do not necessarily prove anything, one way or the other, respecting a writer's opinions: since the Scriptures *themselves* appear, to an Arian, to speak Arianism,—to a Socinian, Socinianism, &c. But that there is in the poem a general leaning such as I have just alluded to, must I think be evident, except to those who, from various causes, and, among the rest, from an early and habitual study of Milton[2], have themselves imperceptibly imbibed similar notions.

These instances are amply sufficient to prove, at the very least, such a possibility as I have alluded to.

Probably, indeed, the whole doctrine of justification through the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers, may be traced in

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1 At Rimini, A.D. 360. Above 400 prelates attended it.

2 When I speak, however, of Milton as Arian, I do not mean that he precisely coincided with Arius: much less, designed to enrol himself among his disciples. I mean merely to designate the *kind* of error towards which his language tends. Milton certainly was "nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri;" well inclined to think for himself, though not always to "think soberly."

a great degree to these semi-Arian views. Men are apt to conclude that the "righteousness of *Christ*" must denote something distinct from the indwelling of the *Holy Spirit*, bringing forth fruit unto holiness; because they fear to confound together, what they habitually, though unconsciously, consider two different Agents. Whereas Scripture, if they would submit to be implicitly led by it, promises that Christ will come unto his servants and "make his abode with them;"—that "hereby know we that He (Christ) dwelleth in us, by his Spirit which He hath given us;" and that "the Lord is the[1] Spirit."

"First, I observe," says Archbishop Sumner, "that though St. Paul clearly refers back to Adam the origin of that natural corruption which requires the atonement of Christ, as the passages already cited have proved; yet he does not in his general practice insist upon Adam's guilt as the *immediate* cause of divine wrath against those he is addressing, but prefers to take his argument from its effects upon their own personal character. These consequences he represents as indisputable and universal, which must be constantly borne in mind both in the first application to Christ as the author of salvation, and throughout the whole of the Christian's life and conflict with the world. The first consequence of that 'fault and corruption of nature,' which we derive from Adam, is actual sin and transgression of the moral law. The converts at Rome he humbles by a commemoration of the '*idolatry, fornication, wickedness, maliciousness, covetousness, and all unrighteousness,*' to which they had been given up in their unconverted state. i. 29, &c.

"To the Corinthians, after enumerating the heinous sinners who shall not inherit the kingdom of God, he adds,

"'*Such were some of you.*' I. vi. 11.

"To the Ephesians he says, 'You hath (God) quickened, *who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*' ii. 4. And very emphatically,

"'Let no man deceive you with vain words; for, *on account of these things*, (fornication, uncleanness, covetousness) *cometh the wrath of God* upon the children of disobedience.' Eph. v. 6.

"The Colossians he thus reminds of what they owed to Christ: 'You that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind *by wicked works*, yet now hath (Christ) reconciled.' i. 21.

[1] Not "that" as our translation has it.

"In the Epistle to the Thessalonians the Gentiles are condemned as living '*in the lust of concupiscence.*' I. iv. 5. In that to Timothy, St. Paul declares himself to have been the chief of sinners, because he had been a '*blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious.*' I. i. 13.

"Titus he instructs to put his flock in mind of their former sinful life. 'For we ourselves also were sometime *foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.*' iii. 3.

"To the Hebrews it was sufficient to show that 'the high priest needed *daily* to offer up sacrifice, *first for his own sins, and then for those of the people.*' vii. 27.

"So 1 Peter iv. 3, 'The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought *the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.*'

"This, then, is the first consequence of the fall of Adam, evinced by actual sin: 'that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God;' and ready to embrace with humility and consciousness of guilt the righteousness which is by faith.

"I next observe, that, as far as we may be allowed to judge from the mode in which St. Paul introduces this leading doctrine of Christianity, it appears that he deemed it more necessary and advisable to enforce among his disciples the positive effect of original sin upon their own hearts and lives, than the punishment to which they were liable from the fall of Adam, considered as *their federal head.* He was well aware, that the guilt of actual transgression comes immediately home to the hearer's conscience. Whereas, 'it is the hardest thing in the world to bring carnal reason to submit to and approve of the equitableness of God's proceedings against us for the sin of Adam. Flesh and blood can hardly brook the acknowledgment that it is most righteous, that we should be *actually* and *personally* wretched, who were *federally* disobedient and rebellious.'[1]"—*Sumner's Apostolical Preaching*, ch. iii.

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[1] Hopkins on the *Covenants.*

ESSAY VII.

ON APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS IN SCRIPTURE.

Difficulties of Scripture a reason for the attentive study of it.

§ 1 It has been above remarked (Essay II.) that the expression of the Apostle Peter relative to the "things hard to be understood" in Paul's writings, has been employed to furnish an excuse at least, if not a reason, for neglecting and keeping out of sight those writings; as being, to the generality of Christians, both too abstruse to be studied with any profit, and too liable to perversion to be approached with safety. And the principle of avoiding altogether whatever is hard to be understood, or liable to be wrested to a destructive purpose, naturally extends itself (as indeed the passage in question cannot but seem to warrant) to other parts of Scripture as well as to Paul's Epistles; till the result ensues of an exclusive attention to certain narratives of fact, and plain moral precepts; while all that relates to the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, is left, as matter of mere speculative inquiry, in the hands of learned theologians.

Of the precise extent of such an error, no one individual can be an adequate judge; but that it is not imaginary—that it does prevail to a considerable degree—is a conclusion which I am convinced no one will doubt who has made extensive and careful observations. Indeed, there is in the human mind a kind of indolence which tends to produce this consequence. The remark of the intelligent historian of Greece, will remain as true as ever while human nature continues the same; that

"the generality of men are averse to labour in the investigation of truth, and ready rather to acquiesce in what is set before them." The most corrupt Churches, in the darkest and most priest-ridden ages and countries, have only taken advantage of (what they could not have created) this disposition of the many to leave the task of searching the Scriptures to the learned few,—to let *them* acquire knowledge, instead of themselves,—and to acquiesce without inquiry into whatever these should promulgate. The Clergy of those Churches were thence looked to, not as leaders and assistants to the laity in the study of Scripture, but as their substitutes; and the Word of God became, in consequence, a prohibited book to the great body of Christians: who were thus left to the guidance of men often themselves ignorant of Scripture, but whose ignorance the others had lost the means of detecting. This state of things, however, no priestcraft could have brought about, had not the dread of laborious investigation prepared the way for it[1].

That there *are* difficulties in many parts of Scripture,—as great perhaps in Paul's writings as in any,—and that there is consequent danger of mischievous perversion, is undeniable; and is indeed what analogy would prepare us to expect: for if the Scriptures could be properly understood without any trouble, and were incapable of perversion to bad purposes, they would be extremely unlike the rest of God's gifts.

But the difficulties of Scripture, as well as the danger of misinterpreting it, are evidently an additional reason for diligence in the study of it. And Peter's implied *censure* of "those who are unlearned" (that is, ill acquainted with the religion of Jesus Christ) and (as will naturally follow) "unstable," and likely to be "blown about with every wind of doctrine," should operate as a caution, not against the study of the Scriptures,

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[1] I have treated of this subject more at large in a Sermon on the *Christian Priesthood*, subjoined to the Second Edition of the *Bampton Lectures;* and also in the Essay (Third Series) on *Vicarious Religion*.

but against the faults which would lead us to wrest them to our destruction.

To examine into all the difficulties of Scripture, or even of Paul's writings alone, would be a task to which perhaps the whole life of any single individual would be scarcely adequate: to lay down all the rules that might be applicable in such a task, would far exceed my present limits; but it may be worth while to offer a few remarks on some of the most important, and, at the same time, most commonly overlooked, of those *principles* which should be kept in view in the study of the doctrinal parts of Scripture; and the neglect of which has aggravated, if not produced, many of the difficulties complained of (in Paul's writings especially), and has led, in many instances, to perplexity, if not to error.

Principles to be kept in mind in this study.

§ 2 (1) It is evidently of great importance, with a view to the right interpretation of any author, to consider, and to understand fully, his general drift and design. If we are mistaken in this point, the utmost diligence and the utmost ingenuity may sometimes answer no other purpose than to lead us the further astray. Now it is, I conceive, not uncommon to consider Revelation as designed, in part, to convey to us speculative truths: — to increase our knowledge concerning divine things as they are in their own intrinsic nature;—in short, to teach us not merely *religion* properly so called, (that is, the *relations between* God and Man,) but also what may be styled *theological philosophy* — a certain branch of abstract science[1]. All men, it is true, acknowledge revelation to *have* a practical purpose; but it is conceivable that this might still be the case, though it were not *confined* to such purposes;—it might, conceivably, propose to our belief, both practical truths, and speculative truths also, distinct from each other; and such

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1 Hinds's *Rise and Early Progress of Christianity.* Introduction, p. 31. See also Essay IV. (First Series.)

a notion of the christian revelation, may, without being distinctly avowed, be nevertheless practically entertained and acted upon.

(2) Nearly allied to, and resulting from, such a view of the Scriptures, viz. as being, more or less, of the nature of a philosophical system, is the expectation (before alluded to) of finding in them a regular technical vocabulary;—a set of terms confined, each to its own appropriate sense, in which it shall be uniformly and precisely employed. This might indeed take place in a purely practical system; but in any case where speculative scientific truth was the object, it would be altogether requisite; and the more the Scriptures are viewed in this light, the more the student will be disposed to regard each word and phrase as bearing throughout a fixed and peculiar sense; just as might be expected in a Creed,—Catechism,—system of Articles,—code of Ethics, or any such composition[1].

(3) In any scientific treatise, employing its own appropriate technical terms, any single detached passage will usually be sufficiently intelligible, to one who is familiar with the definition of those terms. It may, indeed, need others to *establish its truth*, or to be combined with it for the proof of ulterior truths; but not, to ascertain its meaning. In proportion, therefore, as the Scriptures are regarded as approaching to the character of a philosophical system, furnished with a regular technical phraseology, in the same degree will the student be disposed to build conclusions on insulated passages, without thinking it necessary in every instance to refer to the context, and to explain one part of Scripture by others.

(4) Lastly, one who has been accustomed to take in any degree such a view of Scripture as I have been describing, (and there are many who *are* disposed to do so, though without acknowledging it, even to themselves,) will, of course, when they meet with passages which seem at variance with each other, be inclined (if, indeed, they are not absolutely driven into doubts as to the truth of some portion of Scrip-

[1] See Essay on *Omissions*. (First Series.)

ture) to regard these merely in the light of *difficulties* designed for the trial of their faith; which they must surmount as well as they can, by explaining away such texts as are most adverse to their own conclusions; while they dwell on every one that favours them; softening down, if I may so speak, by their interpretation, every other part of Scripture, into a conformity with the hypothesis which they have built on some selected portion.

It is true, indeed, that no one ever professed a design of studying Scripture on such a plan as has been described; but it is no less true that many have at all times evinced, in various degrees, a tendency to slide into it insensibly;—that to these causes, in great measure, may be traced almost all the erroneous systems of faith which have at various times prevailed;—and that many of the difficulties complained of, especially the *discrepancies* between the several parts of Scripture, and particularly between the Apostle Paul and the other Sacred Writers, have been either produced or greatly aggravated by this mistaken mode of studying the Sacred Records.

That the Scriptures contain nothing like a philosophical system, set forth in technical phraseology, and that we must not expect to understand them by confining our attention to certain insulated passages, and disregarding or explaining away the rest, but must interpret each by the context, and from the rest of Scripture—these maxims appear so obvious when distinctly stated, that we are apt to be the less sensible what vigilant care is requisite in order to conform to them steadily in practice. It may be advisable, therefore, to offer some brief remarks on each of the points that have been just alluded to.

The knowledge revealed, not speculative, but relative to Man, and practical.

§ 3 (1.) That the natural desire of knowledge for its own sake, tends to influence men's judgment respecting a divine revelation, in which they are apt to seek, not merely practical truths, but the gratification of speculative curiosity,

I have elsewhere taken occasion to remark[1]. All pretended revelations accordingly, and legendary tales of saints,—all the disquisitions concerning things divine, of the heathen philosophers, and, I fear we may add, of some Christian theologians, however otherwise different, concur in this, that they relate in great measure, if not exclusively, to the nature and attributes and works of the Supreme Being, as He is in Himself;—to the real state of things in the invisible world, however unconnected with human conduct: while *our* revelation is characterized, as I there observed, by abstaining from speculative points,—by refusing to gratify mere curiosity,—by teaching, in short, not philosophy, but what is properly called Religion,—the knowledge, *i.e.* of the *relations* between God and Man, and of the practical truths thence resulting.

Those, therefore, are not likely to interpret Scripture rightly, who are not content with relative truths, but seek to ascertain, in each instance, the real state of things; the knowledge of which, in many cases probably could not be imparted to us with our present faculties; and is often withheld, where it might. Such a student is likely to mistake the sense of the Sacred Writers, from not judging aright what kind of instruction it is that they design to impart; his religious notions are "spoiled through *philosophy* and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." And from such a view of the Scriptures, the conclusion that the doctrinal parts of them are unnecessary, unprofitable, and unsafe, to the great mass of Christians, will be the natural result. Both the learned and the unlearned will agree in taking this view of the Scripture-doctrines: the presumptuous inquiries of the one class have a direct tendency to sanction and foster the indolent indifference of the other[2].

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[1] Essay IV. (First Series.)

[2] The sense of the term "mystery," as employed by the Sacred Writers, is very commonly mistaken; and the mistake has been a source of much error.—See Parkhurst's *Lexicon to the New Testament*, on the word Μυστήριον.—See Note A, at the end of this Essay.

In language not scientific, but popular.

(2) And as nothing was further from the design of Paul and the other Sacred Writers, than to frame a philosophical system, so, they aimed at no philosophical regularity of language: their writings, as I have before remarked, were popular, not scientific; they expressed their meaning on each occasion, in the words which, on each occasion, suggested themselves as best fitted to convey it to readers of plain understanding; and these terms are to be understood, though not indeed always in their ordinary sense, yet on the other hand, not according to any precise scientific definition, but each with reference to the context of the place where it is found.

To be interpreted by comparing one passage with another.

(3) Again, it is this popular and unsystematic character of the Sacred Writings that makes it the more unsafe to dwell on detached portions of them, instead of comparing each part of Scripture with the rest. Not merely incomplete knowledge, but actual error, will often be the result; because it will often happen (as might be expected in an unscientific discourse) that the author has in view, in some particular passage, not the full development of any truth, but the correction of some particular *mistake*,—the inculcation of some particular *caution*,—or the enforcement of some particular *portion* of a doctrine or precept; so that such a passage, contemplated by itself, would tend to partial, and, consequently, erroneous views.

Especially those seemingly at variance.

(4) And as it is hence necessary to call in the aid of different parts of Scripture for the interpretation of each other, so, those which appear the most at *variance* with each other,—which if taken singly, and strictly interpreted, would contradict each other,—are, for that very reason, the most important to be brought together and contemplated in connexion. The seeming contradictions in Scripture are too numerous not to be the result of design; and doubtless *were* designed, not as mere difficulties to try our faith and patience, but as furnishing the most suitable mode of instruction that could have been devised, by mutually

explaining, and modifying or limiting, or extending, one another's meaning. By this means we are furnished, in some degree, with a test of the truth or falsity of our conclusions: as long as the appearance of mutual contradiction remains, we may be sure that we are wrong:—when we can fairly and without violence[1] *reconcile* passages of opposite tendencies, we may entertain a hope that we are right.

Such must be the procedure of the candid inquirer after truth; and by which, through divine help, he may hope to attain it. Those whose object is to find arguments in support of a favourite hypothesis built on a partial view of Scripture, will often be no less successful in *their* object;—in finding texts that will serve to give plausibility to their own system, and to perplex an opponent. But that opponent will usually have exactly the same advantages on his side also; each party having apparently some portion of Scripture favourable to his scheme, and others which he can hardly reconcile with it: and both parties perhaps being equally remote from the truth, and guilty of the very same error as to their mode of interpreting Scripture.

Apparent contradictions of Scripture, numerous.

§ 4 That the apparent contradictions of Scripture *are* numerous,—that the instruction conveyed by them, if they be indeed designed for such a purpose, is furnished in abundance,—is too notorious to need being much insisted on.

We are told that God "repented of having made man upon the earth,"—that He "repented of having made Saul King over Israel,"—that "He repenteth Him of the evil;" and again, that "He is not the son of man that He should repent;" and that "in Him is no variableness nor shadow of turning."

We are told that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;" yet again, by the very same author, that "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves[2]."

[1] See Pascal's *Thoughts*, XIII. 12.

[2] "When the Apostle John says that 'whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World, and that every one who is

We read in one apostolical Epistle, that Abraham was justified by faith, and in another, that he was justified by works.

One discourse of our Lord's, in which He makes mention of the Day of Judgment, and describes the blessing and the curse respectively pronounced on those who have performed or neglected such charitable offices as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and ministering to the sick, might seem to favour the conclusion that our final doom is to depend exclusively on our care or neglect of our distressed brethren, without any regard to our faith, or to the purity or the integrity of our lives; in his final charge to his Disciples again, it might seem that everything is made to depend on right belief alone; "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

We are told again by our Lord, to pray and to give alms, secretly; and again, to let our "light so shine before men that they may see our good works;" and by the Apostle, "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together" for the purpose of worship.

We are told by our Lord, "He that is not with me is against me;" and again, "he that is not against us is with us;" —that "he who hateth not his father and mother, and wife and children, and all that he hath, cannot be his disciple;" and again by his Apostle, that "he who provideth not for his own house is worse than an infidel."

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born of God, doth not commit sin,' it cannot be supposed that he meant to attribute to Christians moral *perfection*, and *impeccability*; when, on the contrary, he exhorts them to 'confess their sins.' Far was it from his design, to teach that one who did but feel convinced of having experienced the new-birth, might safely remit his exertions, and relax his vigilance against sin, and 'count himself to have apprehended' and to be thenceforward sure of divine acceptance, and of everlasting life, without 'taking heed lest he fall.' On the contrary, he was writing—as is well known—in opposition to those Gnostics of his day, who were grossly Antinomian, and who, while they professed to 'have no sin' in God's sight, and to be sure of salvation through their supposed 'knowing the Gospel' (Gnosis), lived a life of flagrant immorality.

"In contradiction to these monstrous tenets, he declares that every one who has a well-grounded 'hope in Christ, purifieth himself, even as He is pure:'—that a sinful life is *inconsistent* with the character of the 'sons of God;'—that the *tendency*, in short, and suitable result of being 'born of God,' is opposed to the commission of sin."—*Tract on Sacraments*, p. 49—50.

The same, again, who tells his Disciples, "the Father hath sent me;" "I go to the Father;" "the Father is greater than I;" "I can of mine own self do nothing;" tells them also, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father,—I am in the Father, and the Father in me,—I and the Father are one." The same who tells them, that He "will not leave them comfortless, but will come unto them;" and "lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," tells them also, "if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you;" yet again He tells them of "the Comforter whom *the Father* will send, in his (Christ's) name;" and again in another place, "if any man keep my saying, my Father will love him, and *we* will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

And He who was preached to Cornelius as one whom "God anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power," is spoken of by Paul, as "over all, God blessed for ever," "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily[1]." And instances of a similar character might be multiplied to a great extent.

I am well aware what copious and satisfactory explanations have been given of a multitude of such seeming discrepancies as these: the only point that pertains to the present question, and which we ought, I think, strongly to dwell upon, is, that they are not to be regarded merely in the light of *difficulties*, but rather as belonging to the mode of *instruction* employed in Scripture. Even in teaching moral duties, there are good reasons for introducing, as we find is occasionally done, some maxims which, taken separately, and interpreted with literal strictness, are at variance with each other, but which, when taken in connexion, serve to explain and modify each other. Instructions thus conveyed are evidently more striking and more likely to arouse the attention; and also, from the very circumstance that they call for careful reflection, more likely to make a lasting impression[2].

[1] See Appendix to *Elements of Logic*. Art. "Person."

[2] See the following Essay.

For what purpose designed.

But there are additional reasons for adopting this mode of conveying to us the requisite knowledge concerning mysteries which are not directly comprehensible by our understanding. Since no language could convey to Man, with his present faculties, in *proper terms*, a clear and just notion of those attributes and acts of the Supreme Being, which revelation designed to impart, it was necessary for this purpose to resort to *analogical* expressions, which may convey to us, in faint shadows and figures, such a knowledge of divine mysteries as is requisite, and is alone within the reach of our capacity[1]. Now the disadvantage attending the use of such language is, that men are sometimes apt to understand it too literally, and to interpret what is said more strictly than was intended. And the best remedy against this mistake, is to *vary* the figures employed as much as possible;—to illustrate the same thing by *several different* analogies; by which means these several expressions, being inconsistent when understood literally, will serve to limit and correct each other; and thus, together, to convey more clearly the real meaning designed[2].

What has been just said, may be illustrated by the language we employ in speaking of the human mind and its operations; respecting which, we have few or no terms that are not originally, at least, borrowed from the material world. For instance, it is very common to speak of the Memory as a kind of storehouse or repository:—we speak of *treasuring* up things in the memory; of having the memory well *stored;* and the like. Now there might be a danger that by the long and familiar use of such figurative expressions, we should at length come to forget that they *are* figurative;—to imagine the brain to be literally a kind of storehouse, and the ideas or notions to be some real things actually laid up within it: but this mistake is guarded against by another, and quite different, set of figurative expressions for describing the same thing; for we

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[1] See Archbishop King's Discourse on *Predestination.*

[2] See Stewart's *Philosophy*, Vol. I.

often again speak of the Memory as a kind of *writing-tablet;* we speak of things being *written,—imprinted,—engraved,* on the memory; or again, of their being *erased* from the memory. Now these expressions again would mislead men, if understood literally; but this is prevented by those other modes of expression before mentioned; which in their turn are limited and explained by these. For by considering that the two, when taken literally, contradict each other,—that the memory cannot be, literally, at once a storehouse and a writing-tablet,—we are habitually reminded that it is literally neither; but is so called, only by analogy[1].

Now as we are thus unable to speak even of the workings of the human mind without using such figurative expressions, much less can we expect that all which is to be taught us of the things relating to the Most High, can be conveyed to us in any other way. And in each case it is requisite that the figures employed should be several and various, in order the better to guard us against understanding any one of them more literally than was intended. It was designed therefore that many of the expressions employed should be such as would, if strictly and literally interpreted, contradict each other; and such as may, when reconciled together, lead us as near the truth, as our minds are capable of approaching. The mariner who has to steer his passage through the untracked ocean, when it happens that he cannot have the exact line of his course pointed out, is often enabled to avoid any important deviation from it, by being acquainted with certain boundaries on each side of it, and by keeping his vessel between them. Certain rocks and landmarks may serve to furnish to his eye a kind of line, which will secure him, as long as he keeps within them, from certain shoals or currents which he is to avoid on one side of his destined course: but this is of no service in guarding him against the dangers which may beset him on the *opposite* quarter: for *this* purpose, another line

[1] See *Elements of Logic.* Dissertation, chap. v. § 1, towards the end.

must be pointed out to him, in the same manner, on the contrary side: and though neither of these lines is precisely that of the course he is to steer, yet an attention to both of them will enable him to proceed midway, in safety, and in the direction required. Even thus, it will often happen, that two apparently opposite passages of Scripture may together enable us to direct our faith or our practice aright; one shall be calculated to guard us against certain errors on one side, and the other, on the other side; neither, taken alone, shall convey the exact and entire truth; but both taken in conjunction, may enable us sufficiently to ascertain it. Perplexity, therefore, and error must be the result of an undue preference, and an overstrict interpretation, of one or two such expressions, to the neglect of the others. For we have in many instances (to use another illustration) something corresponding to the composition of forces in mechanics: several different texts will be analogous to several impulses in various directions acting on a body which is to be set in motion, and whose combined effect will propel it in the direction required; though no one of the impulses, taken singly, is acting precisely in that direction.

The knowledge imparted of mysterious truths analogical and indistinct.

§ 5 After all, indeed, the notions conveyed to us in this way can be but very faint and indistinct; but for that very reason they are the less likely to be incorrect; for if we obtain a *full and clear* notion of things beyond the reach of the human faculties, it cannot fail to be an *erroneous* notion. The main object of revelation being to represent to us, not so much what God is in Himself, as what He is relatively to us, with a view to our practical benefit, this object may be sufficiently accomplished by dim and faint pictures of things which could not otherwise be revealed at all. The "light which no man can approach unto," if presented in unmitigated blaze to eyes too weak to endure it, would blind instead of enlightening: we now "see by means

of the reflection of a glass," what we could not otherwise see at all.

Although, however, we may well *believe* that we are deficient in faculties for comprehending, as they are in themselves, many things of which the Scriptures furnish us with some faint representations, yet since, of course, no one can form a distinct conception of the nature and extent of his *own* deficiency, it may be profitable to illustrate our own case by that of a person destitute of some faculty which we do possess; by which means we may the better understand the nature of that mode of instruction which the Scriptures adopt, and the advantage and necessity of employing it for such Beings as we now are. Let any one, for instance, attend to the case of a man born blind, and endeavour to convey to him some idea of the sense of seeing, and of the nature of light, and colours. When you attempt this, you will then be in a situation answering in some degree to that of the Inspired Writers when they are instructing us in the unseen things of God.—You, might easily explain to the blind man that colours are perceived by the eyes; which convey to men (as well as the organs of the other senses, and even better) a knowledge of the objects around us; you might also easily make him understand that light is something different from heat, and yet proceeds from the sun,—a fire,—a candle,—or the like; and that when nothing of this kind is present, there is darkness, in which no one can see; and also that light is cheerful and agreeable, and darkness something melancholy. So far, we are giving merely *general* descriptions; which would be intelligible enough, but could convey only the most faint and imperfect idea of Seeing. You might then impart some further knowledge by means of the *analogy* of the other senses; for instance, you might teach him that Seeing, in one respect, resembles Hearing and Smelling, inasmuch as it conveys a knowledge of things at a distance, as they do; but that, nevertheless, it is as different from either of them as they are from each other; and that, moreover, Seeing gives us, what Hearing and Smelling cannot, a notion

of the magnitude and of the form of bodies: in which respect it agrees with the sense of Touch; though this last again conveys the knowledge of such bodies only as are close to us: whereas Sight extends to a distance.

Now such instruction as this, given to a blind man, may serve to illustrate what has been just said about the apparent contradictions in Scripture; for the blind man might easily interpret the two parts of this lesson as contradictory; and might say, "How can the same thing bear any resemblance to Hearing, and at the same time to Feeling?" Or he might regard even each part of the lesson as in itself contradictory and impossible;—saying, "You would fain persuade me that there is some way of touching things at a distance; or that there is a kind of Hearing or of Smelling by which one can judge of form and magnitude; neither of which is conceivable." And it is plain, that if he regarded *either* part of your instruction, *by itself*, and was not careful to limit and explain it by the other, he would be utterly misled; for he would suppose Seeing to be much more like some one of the other senses than it really is. But if he were careful to attend to the whole, together, and to consider that two things may be very much alike in one respect, and yet very different in others[1], and that the same thing may be compared to several others which are themselves quite unlike, and may resemble one of these things in one respect, and another in another, and in some respects again may differ from all of them, he would acquire, a faint, indeed, and indistinct notion of Sight, but as far as it went, not an incorrect one. For he would understand that Sight in one respect corresponds [or is analogous] to Smelling and Hearing, inasmuch as it extends to distant objects; and again, in another respect, to Touch, inasmuch as it gives an idea of shape and size; that it differs from each of these respectively in the circumstance wherein it agrees with the other; and that it differs in many points from both. So that by interpreting

[1] See King's Discourse on *Predestination*.

each of these analogies in such a manner as to be reconcileable with the other, he would be using the best means to avoid misunderstanding either, and to attain the most perfect knowledge which his natural deficiency would allow. For if you attempted, beyond this, to give him any *distinct* and *precise* knowledge of the nature of light and colours, you would be more likely to confuse and mislead, than to instruct him.

The circumstance that the knowledge conveyed to us in Scripture, in many cases, is not merely incomplete in *degree*, but, being conveyed to us by Figures, is also *different in kind* from that more direct and perfect knowledge which we may hope hereafter to attain, is alluded to, perhaps, in that expression of Paul's respecting the glorified state; "whether there be knowledge, it shall *vanish* away[1];" we might have expected him, perhaps, to promise rather an *increase* and extension of our knowledge; but it appeared to him, probably, that the knowledge we now possess concerning several points not fully comprehensible to us, is so utterly different in kind, from that which is reserved for us, that the change might more properly be called an entire *vanishing* of the notions we are at present able to form, and a substitution of others in their place. In like manner, if we suppose a blind man who had been instructed in the way just described, to obtain Sight, all those faint analogical notions of Seeing, which we may conceive him to have formed, would fade away from his mind, and be succeeded by others incomparably more direct and clear[2].

Meanwhile our care must be, during our state of trial here below, not to imagine our knowledge more complete than it is; nor to expect from the Scriptures such information as they were not meant to supply[3]. We must not study them as de-

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[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 8—10.

[2] See the interesting and valuable account of a boy born blind and couched by Mr. Cheselden, extracted from the *Philosophical Transactions*, by Mr. H. Mayo, in his *Physiology*, p. 163.

[3] "Has the reader ever attempted to state to himself distinctly, what he understands by the term *revelation*, meaning, a revelation of the divine nature? Neither the voice, the vision, the dream, nor the instinct, can be said to be God. All are evidently vehicles, and modes of communicating his messages to man.

signed to convey, as it were, in terms of art, the speculative truths of philosophy; but must seek, in the first instance at least, and with the greatest diligence, such truths as are relative to Man, and practical;—nor must we allow ourselves, in any case, to interpret strongly all the texts which seem to offer themselves on one side, while we explain away all that are on the other side; as if on the ground that they are not to be taken literally, we were thence authorized to affix to them *any* signification whatever that may chance to suit our views: but we must endeavour honestly to reconcile Scripture with itself, and thus to avail ourselves of that mode of instruction which our divine Teacher has thought best for us. So shall we be enabled, through divine help, to avoid, or to diminish, many of the difficulties which presumptuous speculators, or partial and prejudiced inquirers, have to encounter in the Scriptures: and we shall find them "able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

'Him no man hath seen at any time.' Suppose, then, we wished to convey a *description* of an object of sight to one born blind; (for that is our condition in relation to the divine nature;) he may perhaps be made to receive some indistinct idea of it through his sense of hearing; and the vehicle of this revelation, as it may be termed, would be a voice. Some contrivance may be afterwards invented which should convey to him the same description, by submitting to his touch figures representing it, or, as is done in some asylums, by letters and words strongly impressed, so as to be distinctly felt. If it had so happened, that he was at length favoured with the gift of sight, (as occurred with some in the miraculous period of the Church), that same description might be set before his eyes in a painting. Meanwhile, suppose him never yet to have witnessed the object, itself thus variously represented. He would then have become acquainted with it in three distinct ways, and have been enabled to improve and to apply his knowledge of it by means of each; still, he would hardly be absurd enough to make either of these assertions,

"1. That the sounds, the figures, the writing, or the painting, were the very thing described,

"2. That the variety in the mode of conveying the description implied any corresponding distinction in that one object, the idea of which was thus variously communicated to him."—Hinds's *History of the Rise and Progress of Christianity*. Vol. I. pp. 295, 296.

NOTE TO ESSAY VII.

NOTE A, page 169.

THE ancient heathen had certain sacred rites, in which were disclosed, to those "initiated;"—certain secrets, which were carefully to be kept concealed from the uninitiated, (ἀμύητοι,) the great mass of the professors of the religion. The Apostle naturally makes allusion to these, by the use of the word "mystery," to denote those designs of God's providence, and those doctrinal truths, which had been kept concealed from mankind "till the fulness of time" was come, "but now were *made manifest*" to believers. And he frequently adverts to one important circumstance in the *christian* mysteries, which distinguishes them from those of paganism; viz. that while these last were revealed only to a chosen few, the Gospel-mysteries, on the contrary, were made known to all who would listen to and obey the truth; whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, barbarian or Greek. All Christians were "initiated" (συμμύσται, as one of the ancient Fathers calls them), and those only remained in darkness who wilfully shut their eyes; "if our gospel be *hid*, it is hid to them that are *lost*, whom the prince of this world hath *blinded*."

Now our ordinary use of the word "mystery" conveys the notion of something that we cannot understand at all, and which it is fruitless to inquire into. I am not *censuring* this use of the word; but if we interpret according to our own usage, an author who employs it differently, it is plain we shall be misled. Both we and the Sacred Writers, indeed, understand by the word, something hidden from one party, and known to another, (for we suppose all mysteries to be known to God); but there is this difference; that *we* use the word in *reference* to the party from whom the knowledge is *withheld;* the Apostles, in reference to those to whom the knowledge is *revealed.* Such an expression as, "this is a mystery to us," conveys to *us* the idea that it is something we do not and cannot understand; to Paul it would convey the idea that it is something which "now is made manifest," and which we are, therefore, called upon to contemplate and study; even as his office was "to *make known* the mystery of the Gospel." Not that he meant to imply that we are able fully to understand the divine dispensations;

but it is not *in reference* to this their inscrutable character that he calls them mysteries, but the reverse; they are reckoned by him mysteries, not *so far forth as* they are hidden and unintelligible, but so far forth as they are *revealed* and *explained*.

For another use of "mystery," to signify a symbolical representation, see Parkhurst's *Lexicon*.

It is in that sense that in the second of the post-communion prayers, the bread and wine are called "holy mysteries;" *i.e.* emblems.

ESSAY VIII.

ON THE MODE OF CONVEYING MORAL PRECEPTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Moral precepts of the New Testament often conveyed in apparent contradictions.

In the preceding Essay some remarks were offered relative to the methods employed for communicating as much as was needful to be known concerning the more abstruse doctrines of our religion; viz. by apparent *contradictions;* —by expressions which, if taken literally, would be at variance with each other; and which consequently must be mutually explained and modified by each other, in order that they may be reconciled. And in this case the advantage of such a procedure is evident; the things themselves are such as we are no more capable of distinctly and fully comprehending, than a blind man can, the nature of light and colours; such instruction, therefore, as we *can* receive concerning them, must be necessarily imparted according to the same principles by which we should convey to the blind some idea of Sight; viz. by employing several *different* analogies, each of which may serve to correct the others, and all of which in conjunction may convey a notion as nearly approaching to the reality as the case will permit.

But (as was observed in that Essay) in the inculcation of moral precepts, there cannot be the same reason for employing this method, as there is in doctrinal instruction respecting inscrutable mysteries. And yet there are not a few directly practical passages, in different parts of the New Testament, which, if taken literally, and in their full force, would contra-

dict each other; and such apparent discrepancies there are, not only between the writings of the Evangelists and the Apostolic Epistles, but also between different portions of our Lord's own discourses. Not only is Paul's censure of that man as "worse than an infidel," who neglects to "provide for those of his own household," at variance with our Lord's declaration, "If any man hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple," if both be understood literally, and without limitation; but also, according to such an interpretation, our Lord's own precept to his disciples to "let their light shine before men," would be no less opposed to his command that their prayers and alms should be strictly concealed. And his description again of the Day of Judgment, in which the performance or neglect of the works of *charity* seems to be the sole ground of distinction between the saved and the condemned, is apparently opposed not only to the Apostle's declaration "by grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God," and to numberless others of the same character, but also to the literal import of Christ's own parting declaration to his disciples, which seems to make the absence or presence of a right belief the only point considered: "he that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved." And many other like instances might be adduced, which plainly show that the system of instructing by apparent contradictions is not confined to doctrinal, but extends to practical points; and that in both cases it is requisite to compare and balance, as it were, against each other, different parts of Scripture, if we would gain a correct view of what it is intended to convey[1].

[1] As I have treated of subjects nearly allied to the one now before us, in the second, third, and fifth Essays of the first Series, it may be worth while briefly to notice in this place, the connexion, and also the distinction, between those and the present Essay. I was speaking, in them, of a *peculiarity* (considering Christianity as compared with any human system) in the *motives* employed by the sacred writers for producing moral conduct, and also, in the *examples* (of Jesus Himself, Essay II. and III., and of children, Essay V.) which they propose for our imitation and self-instruction. At present, I am considering their *mode* of conveying to us the *precepts* of morality. In all, it is the moral in-

§ 1. For what purpose, then, it may be asked, did our Lord and his inspired followers resort to this method of instruction, in respect of those practical duties which are not, like the more abstruse points of faith, beyond the reach of man's faculties?

Reasons for the employment of this and other paradoxical forms.

In order to answer this question, it will be necessary to revert to some considerations which have been formerly suggested[1].

Let it be observed, then, that it was no part of the scheme of the Gospel-revelation to lay down anything approaching to a complete system of moral precepts,—to enumerate everything that is enjoined or forbidden by our religion; nor again, to give a detailed general description of christian duty,—or to delineate, after the manner of systematic ethical writers, each separate habit of virtue or of vice. When the Mosaic Law was brought to a close,—(a law of which we have no Scripture warrant for supposing that any part was intended to continue in force under the Gospel-dispensation, or to be extended to the Gentiles); when this Law, I say, was brought to a close, no *other* set of precise rules was substituted in its place. New and higher motives were implanted;—a more exalted and perfect example was proposed for imitation;—a loftier standard of morality was established;—rewards more glorious, and punishments more appalling, were held out;—and supernatural aid was bestowed; and the Christian, with these incentives and these advantages, is left to apply, for himself, in each case, the principles of the Gospel. He is left to act at his own discretion, according to the dictates of his conscience,—to cultivate christian dispositions,—and thus to be "a law unto himself." From the exact regulations under which the Israelites, when in a condition analogous to child-

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struction of Scripture that I have been treating of; but, distinctly, of the different parts of which it (and indeed all complete moral instruction) consists; namely, 1st, the *Motives* inculcated; 2dly, the *Examples* proposed; 3dly, the *Precepts* delivered.

[1] Essay V.

hood, were placed, he is released; not that he may be under a less strict moral restraint, but that he may attain, under the Gospel-system, a more manly self-government, — a higher degree of moral excellence; even as the precise rules and strict control under which a child is placed, are gradually relaxed as he advances towards maturity; not on the ground that good conduct is less required of a man than of a child, but, on the contrary, because the very maturity of age, which emancipates him from the trammels of childhood, renders him capable of regulating his conduct for himself by his own judgment. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord," (according to the prophet Jeremiah, cited in the Epistle to the Hebrews,) "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel; not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers . . . . for this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." And hence it is, probably, that the Apostle James (i. 25) uses the expression of "the perfect law of liberty[1]."

The system, then, according to which the Christian's life is to be regulated, is one under which, not a less, but a greater degree of moral perfection is expected of him; but which substitutes sublime principles for exact rules. It is this system that the Apostle sometimes calls "Faith,"—sometimes "the Law of Faith," to distinguish it, not from good works, but from the Law of Moses. It is called the Law of Faith, not because Christians are not (which he assures us they are) to stand before Christ's tribunal "to give an account of the things done in the body," but because their moral conduct is required to spring from faith;—from faith in the redeeming mercy of God, "who was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," and the devout gratitude which is the natural result of this;—from faith in the divine holiness and purity of the Saviour, and the consequent desire to tread in *his* steps whose

[1] See *Introductory Lessons on Morals.*

life is our example:—from that faith in his promised rewards which leads to the endeavour after such a preparation of ourselves as may qualify us to dwell "for ever with the Lord;"—from faith in his promised presence with us, even unto the end of the world, by his Spirit "which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure[1]."

Such a system then, it was necessary so to develop, that its true character might not be mistaken. Since Christians were *not* to be guided by a precise code of laws, it was necessary to guard them carefully against *expecting* one. And even during our Lord's own ministry, before the "Law of Faith" was perfectly laid down, (the objects of that faith being but faintly and partially revealed,) still it was needful, even at the very outset, that men should not be led, or left, to suppose, that either a collection of exact rules, or a system of moral philosophy, was about to be proposed to their acceptance;—that either the Mosaic law was to remain in force as to the literal observance of its several precepts, extended by the addition of others,—or that any corresponding system—any fresh enumeration of specific acts forbidden and enjoined,—was to be introduced in the room of it. And care was the more necessary on this point, both because Man in general is more ready to receive even a burdensome law, of this character, than to be left to his own watchful and responsible discretion in acting up to certain principles, and also because the Jews in particular had been *accustomed* to precise regulations, and nice distinctions as to specific acts, even far beyond what the written Law of Moses had laid down.

And yet our Lord's hearers had need of *some* moral instruction. It was important that *illustrations* should be afforded them of the *application* of the general principles of the new religion to each particular point;—it was desirable to enforce such duties as were especially neglected, and to point out the comparative degrees of importance of such as had been unduly

[1] Essay III. (First Series.)

estimated:—many prevailing faults and prejudices called for correction;—and it was needful, universally, to guard against the supposition that the New Covenant was designed to substitute faith for virtuous practice, and to save those who should "call Jesus Lord," while they continued "workers of iniquity." And as all this was to be accomplished in the course of a short ministry, and the instruction was to be conveyed to men for the most part of untutored and unreflective minds, it was the more important that the mode of conveying it should be as striking and permanently impressive as possible; with a constant caution at the same time against the mistake into which the hearers were ever liable to fall;—that of imagining that they were to receive certain definite precepts, and *satisfying* themselves with a literal obedience to each.

Something peculiar then may be expected in the mode of conveying moral instructions, when the object proposed comprehended all the circumstances just mentioned;—when it required that, besides being suited to the capacity and to the moral condition of the hearer, the precepts should at the same time be both forcibly impressive, and also such as to exclude the idea of any intention to lay down a complete moral code.

Precepts, a literal compliance with which would be either impossible, or absurd, or unimportant.

§ 2 In the moral lessons of the Gospel, accordingly, three peculiarities especially may be observed, which have a reference to the circumstances I have noticed, and which may be explained by them.

First, The precepts are often apparently *contradictory* to each other:

Secondly, They are often such that a literal compliance with them would be, in many cases, either *impossible*, or, at least, *extravagant* and *irrational*:

And, *Thirdly*, This literal compliance would in many instances amount to so *insignificant* and *unimportant* a point of duty, as could not be supposed deserving of a distinct inculca-

tion for its own sake. And two, or all three, of these characters may sometimes be found to meet in one single precept.

The reason of all this is clear, from the principles that have been already laid down: every mode is employed of warning the hearers against satisfying themselves with an observance of these precepts according to the letter, in doing or abstaining from some particular action. For, a literal compliance with precepts which, literally taken, are *inconsistent*, would be *impossible*; where that literal compliance would be *wrong or absurd*, it is manifest it could not be *intended*; where it would be *trifling*, it is manifest that it cannot be *all* that is intended. And thus the disciples were driven, if they were sincerely desirous to learn, and would interpret rationally and candidly what they heard, to perceive that such precepts as I am speaking of were designed to explain and to enforce those general principles on which men are to regulate their conduct: while the very circumstance that such instructions excite some degree of surprise, and evidently call for careful reflection, renders them the more likely to make a lasting impression.

Many instances of each description will readily occur to most persons. I will advert to a very few.

When Jesus tells his disciples to pray and to give alms in secret, and not to let their "left hand know what their right hand doeth," and yet exhorts them to "let their light shine before men," it is plain from these precepts, taken in conjunction, and explained by each other, that his design was to discountenance an ostentatious *motive*, but to leave to our own conscientious discretion the mode of performing each action on each occasion. When the publicity of our alms and of our devotions, appears likely to "glorify God," and to benefit men by the influence of a good example, the principles of the Gospel prescribe that publicity; in cases where it tends only to the gratification of our own vanity, and especially when we have reason to fear that we may be too much actuated

by the desire of men's praise, then, concealment is to be preferred.

Again, when men's future destiny is described in one place as determined by their performance or omission of the social duties,—in another, by the government of the tongue,—in another, by belief and baptism alone,—in another, (the parable of the rich man and Lazarus) apparently by the luxuries enjoyed, or privations undergone in the present life,—we may easily learn, by comparing and balancing together all these passages, that no good works of man, not springing from belief in the Gospel, can tend to salvation,—yet that professions of faith in Christ are but a mockery of Him, when unaccompanied with active benevolence towards those whom He calls his brethren;—that we shall be condemned or justified by our *words* as *well as* by our actions;—and that those who set their hearts on the good things of this world, and lay up no treasures in heaven, can have no reasonable expectation of heavenly rewards.

Again, the injunction in the passage before cited, to "hate father and mother," &c. if we would be Christ's disciples[1], is not only, if taken literally, at variance with the exhortations to universal benevolence, and to Paul's command to provide for our families, but also to the plainest dictates of conscience and of common sense. This then is an instance which illustrates

[1] It may be observed by the way, what an *evidence* to the truth of Christianity is afforded by this declaration of our Lord, together with his warning that every one who would be his disciple must be ready to "take up his cross and follow him," and must, in imitation of a man designing to build, and of a king about to make war, coolly calculate beforehand whether he has resources and resolution sufficient to go through with the enterprise. All this constitutes so uninviting a doctrine, that we may be sure no one would have preached it who had any object in view except that of teaching the truth.

We have here therefore one of those many internal evidences of our religion, which may be made completely intelligible to the unlearned Christian. For common sense may convince any one, that had Jesus been either an impostor or an enthusiast, He would never have entertained, and taught others to entertain, such a view of his religion. He would have used all means to invite men to become his disciples, instead of deterring them; and would either Himself have overlooked, or else concealed from the people, the difficulties to be encountered by those who should embrace the Gospel; instead of pointing them out, and earnestly dwelling upon them.

at once two of the principles above laid down. It is plain, therefore, that such a precept could not be meant to be understood and obeyed literally: and if there could be any doubt in what manner Christ intended it should be obeyed, He himself has given us in another place an explanation of it; "He that loveth father or mother *more* than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." It is evident, therefore, that what is intended by the command to hate the objects of our strongest regard, is, that the things of the greatest importance to our happiness, and which have the strongest hold on our affections, must be accounted by us as nothing, in comparison with our devotedness to Christ; and that whenever any of these objects shall chance to stand in the way of our obedience to Him, we must be ready to resign it without a murmur.

Sacrifices of this kind were doubtless much more frequently called for in the first ages of the Church, than they are now: because not only many were called on to abandon their homes and friends, and devote themselves to the propagation of the Gospel in distant countries, but it also frequently happened that men's nearest and dearest connexions were at variance with them respecting the religion of Christ; and that they had to suffer persecution, or at least censure and contempt, from those very friends whose good opinion and regard they had been the most accustomed to prize: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I tell you nay, but rather division: the father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; . . . . . a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

It is plain, therefore, that a man must have been (in such circumstances) very strongly tempted to shrink from the bold and open profession of his faith; and to concede too much to the authority of those around him; and, accordingly, we read of many leading men among the Jews, who sought to compromise the matter, by outwardly renouncing the opinions they inwardly held,—who "believed in Jesus, but secretly," for fear of being

"cast out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

There is not, however, nor ever will be, any time or any country, in which the sincere Christian is not liable to be called upon to make some sacrifices in the cause of Christ—to do, or to forego, or undergo, something, which occasions a painful struggle to his nature: and this our Lord exhorts us deliberately to prepare for, and if we would be his disciples, to give Him a most decided and strong preference to every object that may stand in the way of our faith or of our obedience to Him. This, He in another place very strongly enforces in a figurative form of expression: which also, common sense teaches us, it would be absurd to understand literally; saying, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee;" meaning thereby, that whatever *offends* us as Christians, that is, stands in our way, and obstructs our progress in following our Master's steps, though it may be as dear to us as an eye, or a right hand, must be renounced thoroughly, and heartily, and cheerfully, for his sake, if we expect that He should own us as his disciples.

Now this precept of plucking out an eye, or cutting off a right hand, is far from hard to be understood, as to the spirit and intention of it, and the disposition meant to be recommended; and when it *is* understood, its effects will be, on those who sincerely study to comply with it, exactly what our Lord designed; they *cannot* in this case satisfy their conscience by a literal compliance with it in the performance of any specific act; and, consequently, will the more naturally be led to cultivate that frame of mind, and study to adopt that principle of thorough devotedness to Christ, which He meant to recommend.

Again, in inculcating the duty of gentleness and patience under provocation, He says, "If any man smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left also; if any man will take away thy cloak, let him have thy coat also; if any man compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain;" in which it is evident, that his meaning was, not the mere literal performance of

those specific actions mentioned, but the cultivation of a mild and long-suffering temper. The strong way in which He delivered those precepts—the striking and often paradoxical illustrations which He gave of them—had the effect of making a more lively impression on the hearers' minds, and at the same time guarded them (as I have just before observed) against supposing that it was enough to perform, literally, the particular actions mentioned, without adopting the principle of action which He was illustrating. This last instance, again, combines two of the circumstances above mentioned: the mere literal observance of the precept would not only be in many cases irrational, but also manifestly insufficient, and would fall far short of what is meant to be inculcated; and hence a candid hearer is the more immediately led to understand, that obedience to it implies not the bare performance of this or that particular action, but the careful cultivation of a certain *habit* of action.

The same observations will apply to our Lord's precept against chusing "the most honourable seats at feasts;" and his exhortation to men to occupy a lower place than they have a just title to. He did indeed intend that his rule respecting good manners should be literally observed, since good manners is a part of good morals; but it is evident that this literal compliance was the *least part* of what He designed, and that He took this method of inculcating, generally, a caution against arrogance and self-exaltation.

Universally, indeed, He was accustomed to illustrate whatever principle He had in view, by some particular instance; knowing that this would take better hold on men's attention, and be more surely fixed in their memory, than if He had confined himself to the mere general maxim; and that it would be very easy for any one, after being, by this exemplification, put in possession of the general maxim, to extend and apply it, for himself, to every case that might occur; supposing him to have the sincere disposition to do so, without which no instruction can avail.

Thus, when He was called upon to explain what kind of neighbourly love we ought to show, and towards whom, He illustrates his meaning by relating the parable of a man who "fell among thieves," and He concludes his instruction by saying, "Go and do thou likewise;" which exhortation no one can be so stupid, if he be not also perverse, as to interpret by the letter, as meaning merely that when he might chance to meet with a traveller thus circumstanced, he should relieve him, and that precisely such a case as that in the parable was all that was contemplated. The interpretation of "Go and do thou likewise" was clear enough to any one who wished to understand it; as signifying that we are to regard every one as a neighbour to whom we have an opportunity of doing service, and are to be ready to perform the kind offices of a neighbour towards him.

Instance of the last kind.

But, as I have said, our Lord chose not only to illustrate his general maxim by some particular exemplification; but, also, in order to make it the more clear to his hearers that this *was* his object,—that the instances adduced *were* for the purpose of illustrating the general rule,—it happened very frequently, as in the case of some of the illustrations just mentioned, that He selected by choice such as were in themselves the smallest and most *insignificant* instances of the rule. Thus, when He wished to impress on his disciples in the most forcible manner the duty of being ready to serve, and perform kind offices for, one another, He taught them by an *action*,—by Himself condescending to wash their feet; and afterwards telling them, "ye ought also to wash one another's feet." This, it is well known, was, from the peculiar circumstances of the age and country, one of the chief refreshments to travellers: this particular instance, consequently, was chosen as affording an easy and familiar illustration of the general disposition He designed to inculcate; a readiness to perform all manner of kind offices for one another. Now if the particular office of kindness, selected by Him, had been one of the more *important* services of life, there might have been the more

danger of their supposing that his precept was meant to extend only *to that particular* service mentioned: whereas this was guarded against by his particularizing one of the *smallest:* when He said to them, "ye ought to wash one another's feet," they could not have a doubt that the precept was meant to extend to more than that one point of hospitality, and to comprehend a *general* disposition to befriend one another.

The mode of instruction adopted sufficient for the candid and diligent.

§ 3 To those, then, who are sincerely desirous of instruction, and willing to use care and diligence in seeking it, and in practically applying what they learn, it will, in most cases, be no difficult task, to ascertain what principles those are which our Lord and his Apostles intended, on each occasion, to inculcate, and in what manner Christians are required to exemplify them in their lives.

If we, first, examine the *whole* of each passage, so as to understand the occasion on which any precept was delivered, and to what persons, and under what circumstances; and if we are also careful to compare different (and especially, apparently inconsistent) passages together, so interpreting each as it is explained, or limited, or confirmed, or extended, or otherwise modified, by the rest; we shall be employing those means for ascertaining aright the sense of God's word, which common prudence would prescribe—which doubtless were intended to be employed in such an inquiry,—and which, we may trust, by God's grace, will not be employed in vain.

For the opposite character none would have been sufficient.

On the other hand, the inattentive and the uncandid—those who read the Scriptures without diligent study, or with a study only to find confirmations of their preconceived notions, and vindications of their own conduct,—such, could not have been secured from error, even by any other mode of instruction that could have been adopted. Let it not be objected, therefore, to the method pursued by our Lord and his followers, that it affords an opening, for such as are so disposed, to escape

from any doctrines or duties they may object to, and to model others according to their own inclinations, by dwelling on and enforcing literally, such texts as suit their purpose, and explaining away the rest. The most precise and detailed precepts would have been no less successfully evaded by the same persons; they would easily have found some contrivance, when they were so disposed, to "make the word of God of non-effect, by their tradition."

And the most copious and philosophical system of ethics would have proved no better safeguard against the devices of a corrupt heart. Moral treatises afford no substitute for the exercise of discretion and of candour: philosophy cannot teach its own application: on the contrary, such studies are useful to those only who *employ* that good sense and sincerity of intention, in bringing them into practice in the details of life. It is not enough (as the most illustrious of the ancient moralists has observed[1]) to lay down, that, in each department of conduct, virtue consists in the medium between an excess and a deficiency; it still remains to be decided, in each single instance, where this medium is to be placed; and as the determination of this is necessarily left to the judgment and conscience of the individual, so, any one whose moral judgment is not incorrupt, and who is seeking, not to improve his character, but to vindicate it, may easily find means, first to represent, and afterwards to believe, his own conduct to be exactly the right medium. For, the maxim laid down in another place by the philosopher just alluded to, for applying his own rules, is one which the generality of men completely reverse: he tells each man to observe to which of the two extremes *he* is, in each point, most prone by his own natural disposition, and to regard *that*, as (relatively to him) the worse extreme of the two; being the one into which he is the more liable to fall. The common practice, on the contrary, is for each to regard, (as indeed, is very natural) *that*, as the worse extreme, to which he has the

[1] Arist. *Eth. Nicom.* Book VI. chap. i.

less tendency, and to look with less abhorrence on each fault, in proportion as it is the more congenial to his own inclinations.

Without vigilant and candid self-examination, then, no system of moral instruction that could have been devised, would have been practically available, and *with* this, the instructions afforded in the Gospel, will, through divine help, prove sufficient. There are two objects, neither of which a man will usually fail to attain, who zealously and steadily seeks it; the one is, the knowledge of what in each case he ought to do; the other is, a plausible excuse for doing as he is inclined. The latter of these, the carnally-minded might find in any set of precepts or moral instructions that could have been framed; the former, the spiritually-minded will not fail to obtain in the Gospel.

Only let him not seek in it for what he will not find there; —precise and minute directions for every case that can occur; or a set of insulated maxims which admit of being taken away, as it were, from the context, and interpreted and applied without any reference to the rest of Scripture; or for a general detailed description of moral duties.

But he will find there the most pure and sublime motives inculcated,—the noblest principles instilled,—the most bold and uncompromising, yet sober and rational tone of morality maintained,—the most animating examples proposed, and, above all, the most effectual guidance, and assistance, and defence, provided; even that of the Spirit of Truth, who will enable us duly to profit by the teaching of his inspired Servants; that we "may have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

ESSAY IX.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Indistinct notions entertained, at first, by the disciples, of the character of their Master.

THOSE things which God's most favoured servants under the old dispensation — which "many prophets and kings had in vain desired to see and hear," the disciples of Jesus had been permitted to witness. They had seen the man whom "God had anointed with the Holy Ghost[1];" —and "given it unto Him not by measure[2];"—the "image of the invisible God[3];" "whom no man hath seen at any time[4]," but whom "the only-begotten Son had declared unto them[5];" "being the express image of his Person[6]." Imperfect and indistinct indeed,—perhaps we may say confused,—must have been the notions they entertained respecting the mysterious Being with whom they had been so long holding intercourse. Such must be *our* notions also concerning Him, unless they be erroneous; for the ideas we form on a subject surpassing the powers of our present minds, and which Scripture has but indistinctly revealed, cannot be, at once, *clear*, and *correct*. The disciples, however, had, during our Lord's abode with them, even more imperfect notions respecting Him than they were afterwards taught to form. He had "many things to say unto them, which as yet they could not bear." But they "knew and were sure that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God," and that "He had the words of eternal life;" and they had latterly been further taught that they were not to regard Him as merely bearing the commission of the Most High, like the

[1] Acts x. 38. [2] John iii. 34. [3] Coloss. i. 15.
[4] 1 John iv. 12; also John i. 18. [5] John i. 18. [6] Heb. i. 3.

prophets of old; nor yet as merely some Being of a superhuman nature, whether a creature, or (according to the presumptuous fancies which afterwards prevailed)* some Æon, or Emanation from the Deity, and partaking of the Divine nature[1]: for when asked by Philip, who probably was disposed to entertain some such notion, to show them the Father, He replied, "Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how then sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me[2]? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake." (John xiv.)

*

§ 1 Well therefore might the disciples, when thus far taught, anticipate with grief and dismay the approaching loss of their divine Master—the destruction of "the temple of his body," and the withdrawing of this "manifestation of God in the flesh," with which they had been so long favoured; and He most tenderly sets Himself to relieve their fears and sorrows, by assuring

Promise of Jesus to send the Comforter, not limited to the first Age, nor relating to an abstract religious principle.

[1] The Gnostics (*i.e.* men of "science, falsely so called,"—men claiming, in the title they assumed, to be emphatically such as "knew the Gospel,") taught the doctrine of successive emanations ("endless genealogies" alluded to by Paul) from the Deity (whom they call the "Fulness"), and one from another, of these celestial Beings; in whom they *personified* many of the Scripture-terms relating to the character or the dispensations of the Most High. Such as *Logos* (the Word), of whom they regarded Christ as an incarnation; *Phos* (Light), feigned to have been incarnate in John the Baptist; *Aletheia* (Truth); *Zoe* (Life); *Monogenes* (only-begotten), and others. Without some acquaintance with this tissue of impious absurdity, it is impossible to understand fully the opening of John's Gospel.—See Hinds's *History of the Rise and early Progress of Christianity*. Vol. II. p. 49.

Paul's expressions also, "in Him dwelleth all the *Fulness* of the Godhead *bodily" . . . . . "it hath pleased the Father that in Him should all Fulness dwell," have reference probably to the same heresy.

[2] This mode of expression seems to have been employed, as it constantly is, by our Lord, to guard his hearers against the notion of a *local* Deity,—against literally attributing *place* to the divine mind: thus, He says, "abide in me, and *I in you:*" and, "the same dwelleth in me, *and I in him*," &c.

them of his speedy return to abide with them for ever; "I go away, and come again unto you; a little while, and ye shall not see me, and again a little while, and ye shall see me." It was not, indeed, the bodily presence of their Master in the flesh, that they were to look for as continuing with them "always, even unto the end of the world," as these and several other of his expressions would have led them to suppose, had there not been others to modify and explain them; it was *another* Comforter—the Holy Spirit, whom the Father should send in Christ's name, that should teach them all things, and should "abide with" them "for ever." Yet still, Jesus suffers them not to suppose that they were to transfer their love and allegiance to a new Master, or to look for consolation and instruction to any distinct Being from Himself; though after his ascension He would no longer be, as heretofore, the object daily present to their *senses;* "That Spirit of Truth," He said, they knew; "for He dwelleth *with* you, and shall be *in* you:" "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you[1]" . . . . "he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" . . . . "my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him:" "Abide in me, and I in you[1]: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me; . . . without me ye can do nothing." (John xv.)

That these promises and these precepts of Jesus were not so confined to the disciples then around him as to concern no other Christians, is most evident. If the Apostles could bring forth no fruit except they "abode in Him, and He in them," no more, surely, can we. He had expressly declared that He "prayed not for them alone, but for those also who should

[1] See Note (2), p. 199.

believe on Him through their word;" nor would his promise of being "with them always even unto the end of the world," have been fulfilled, by any assistance bestowed exclusively on one generation of mortal men.

And it is equally clear, I think, to any one who seeks in earnest to be led by the Scriptures, that our Saviour's words are not to be explained as relating merely to a system of doctrines and motives,—to an *abstract religious principle*,—but to a real, individual, *personal* agent; even the Holy Spirit operating on the minds of believers; which is called, amidst the diversity of operations, one and the *same Spirit*, not, figuratively, as when we speak of the spirit of patriotism,—the spirit of emulation,—the spirit of philosophical inquiry, and the like; but literally and numerically, one Being, even the one God, whose Temple is the whole Body of the faithful; which Temple they are warned not "to defile, lest God destroy them[1]." For if any one could even so strain this last expression (as well as many other such) of the Apostle Paul, and likewise all the words of Christ Himself, as to interpret them into mere metaphor, it would still be impossible for him to conceive a mere principle of action,—a christian spirit, in that transferred sense of the word,—enabling Christians to work *sensible miracles*; and these we find distinctly attributed to the immediate agency of the divine Spirit.

One indeed of the many important uses of the miraculous gifts bestowed on the infant Church, and one, doubtless, of those for which they were designed, was this: they served to prove, among other things, that the promised indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in his Church was not to be understood as a mere figure of speech, denoting their adherence to the doctrines He taught, and the possession of the inspired record of them, but a real, though unseen, presence, by his Spirit;—not the mere keeping of his commandments through love for his memory, but a spiritual union with Him; at once the promised

[1] See *The Three Temples of the one true God contrasted*, by Bishop Hinds.

reward, and the bond and support of that obedient love,—the effect at once and cause of our "keeping his saying." "For if any man love me," said He, "he will keep my saying, and my Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Would Jesus have said this of *any man* (*i.e.* every man) who loved Him, if He had been speaking only of the Apostles, and of those others who should receive *miraculous* gifts? Or would Paul, in that case, when writing to the Romans, who had at that time *received no miraculous gifts*[1], have said "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by *the Holy Ghost, which is given* unto us:" . . . . "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God . . . . if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you: if *any man have not* the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his : . . . . . the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit"? &c.

And it is, I conceive, this, the more intimate union of the Spirit of Christ with his disciples—more intimate than that which had existed while He was present with them in the flesh,—that He teaches them to regard as a ground for not only not grieving, but rejoicing, at his departure, which was to lead to such a re-union; "if ye loved me ye would rejoice."

Difference between the Jewish and the christian Churches in this respect.

§ 2 It may be said, however, that since "every good and every perfect gift is from above,"—since from God "proceed all holy desires, good counsels, and just works," we must not account spiritual influence as any peculiar privilege of the Gospel-system, but must acknowledge that good men among the Israelites of old, if not among the heathen also, acted under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Indeed we find them even recognizing this influence by their prayers to God to "make a clean heart within them," &c. And yet, on the other hand, there can surely be no doubt that under the Gospel,

[1] See Rom. i. 11.

some *new* manifestation of God in the Spirit *has* taken place. We cannot suppose that the persons, who by our Lord's directions were baptized into[1] the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—who were "born again of water and of the Spirit," in order to their entering into the newly-founded kingdom of heaven, were admitted to no privilege which had not been all along enjoyed by their fathers even from the Creation. And every part of the New Testament confirms this view. Among the rest, we find in John's Gospel, "this spake He of the Holy Ghost, which they that believed on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet[2];" "because that Jesus was not yet glorified." And again, those twelve disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus in his *third* apostolical journey, had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost[3]." Yet certainly they could not have been ignorant that God is a Spirit. Nor can it well be supposed, that they, and the Evangelist John in the passage just cited, refer to the *miraculous* effusion alone, and call *that extraordinary* agency, especially and exclusively, the Holy Ghost; since they must have known how frequently God had of old inspired the prophets, and enabled many of them to perform various miracles.

In what then are we to conclude the difference consisted between the christian Church and her predecessor, in respect of spiritual endowment? Without presuming to decide on the *degree* of divine assistance bestowed on individuals under the two dispensations respectively, (which would be presumptuous,) this important distinction we may plainly perceive; that, of the christian Church the Holy Spirit is the PROMISED

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[1] Not "*in* the name," as it is in our translation; which probably in this and a few more instances showed too much deference for the Vulgate Latin Version. That translates "in nomine;" a rendering plainly at variance with the original.

[2] "Given," is added by the translators. Πνεῦμα ἅγιον seems used in this place, and in others, (as for instance in Acts viii. 15 and 19, and xix. 2,) for spiritual *influence*, or gifts. When the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a personal *agent*, the Article is prefixed: Τὸ πνεῦμα, τὸ ἅγιον.

[3] See a Discourse on this subject in Bishop Copleston's *Remains*.

and PERMANENT Comforter; He is the "*promise* of the Father," sent that "He may abide with us *for ever*." Whatever sanctifying aid may have been, in fact, supplied, under the Old Covenant, it was no *part* of that *Covenant;*—of the Christian Covenant, it is. God the Holy Ghost,—God manifest in the Spirit, was not the *permanent Ruler* of the former Church, as He is of the christian. As for the divine communications to the prophets, and the *miraculous* powers bestowed on them and on others, under the Old Dispensation, these were not continuous, but *occasional;* inward *sanctifying grace*, again, bestowed on the humble and pious, may have been, for aught we know, constant, but was not *promised.* And hence the Jewish People was never called, like the Christians, the "Temple of the Holy Ghost[1]."

What the Apostle John therefore (as well as those disciples at Ephesus) meant by the Holy Spirit, which, he says, "was not yet," (οὔπω ἦν) must have been, this *covenanted* and *perpetual* manifestation of God in the Spirit, (a manifestation now to faith only, though at first confirmed by sensible miracles) as the Governor, Protector, Consoler, in short, Paraclete, of the christian Church. For we are Christ's *Body;* and "hereby know we that He dwelleth in us, by his *Spirit* which He hath given us." These considerations alone would be sufficient to prove, were other proofs less abundant, that the promised presence of God with the christian Church, cannot, without setting Scripture at defiance, be understood as referring merely to the *writings* of the New Testament which He inspired; since *that* would give us no advantage over the Jewish Church; for "holy men *of old* spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Points of resemblance, and of difference, between

§. 3 The promise of Christ, however, that He would always, even unto the end of the world, be with His Church, which is thus constituted "the

[1] See this view more fully expanded in Bishop Hinds's *Three Temples.*

temple of the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in it," is not understood by all in the same extent. While, on the one hand, some enthusiasts have pretended to inspiration, and other miraculous gifts; many, on the other hand, who are far removed from this error, but who are satisfied with vague and careless notions, have a sort of general idea of spiritual aid not being wholly withdrawn from Christians, but bestowed in a much *less* degree than on the saints of the primitive times; without seeking to determine the *measure*, or the *kind* of spiritual assistance to be reasonably hoped for by each class respectively, or the *signs* by which each might recognise its presence.

our condition at present and that of Christians in the first Age, in respect of spiritual gifts.

And yet it might naturally be supposed, that inscrutable as the nature of God must be to his creatures, and little as they can understand of the reasons and the modes of his dealings with them, at least we should be capable of knowing *what* the spiritual aid is that we are taught to look for, and commanded to pray and to strive for. The humblest peasant, who subsists by the labour of his hands, may be left ignorant indeed of the process by which corn vegetates in the earth, or supplies nutriment to the human frame; but it is needful for his natural life that he should understand how to gain his daily bread, which he is taught to pray for, and to distinguish it from what is useless or noxious; and it is no less needful that the plainest Christian should be able to understand how his spiritual life is to be supported,—the welfare of his soul secured; and should be capable of guarding against any dangerous error on the subject.

It is desirable, therefore, that both the *resemblances* and the *differences* between our condition and that of the primitive Christians, in respect of this point, should be as accurately laid down as possible, and should be frequently dwelt upon; since the worst consequences may result from either underrating or overrating the spiritual aid to be expected by Christians of the present day.

Thus much is generally admitted; that the promise of the

Holy Spirit extended to both classes of Christians; but that the sensibly-miraculous gifts bestowed on the early Church have been long since withdrawn; and these are usually, and very suitably, called the *extraordinary* gifts; as bestowed at a particular time, and for an especial purpose; and are thus distinguished from what are called the *ordinary* operations of the Spirit, as needful alike for all Christians, and at all times. A more particular consideration, however, of some of the several points of resemblance, and of difference, between the two cases, is requisite for the purpose of guarding against some prevailing errors, and of calling attention to doctrines not always sufficiently noticed, or adequately developed.

And this inquiry falls naturally under two heads, (which however cannot be kept entirely distinct); *viz.* 1st, as to the different *classes of gifts themselves*; and 2ndly, as to the *tokens* by which the presence of each is to be known—the way in which each kind of spiritual influence is to be recognized.

Miraculous gifts peculiar to the primitive Church.

§ 4 First, then, the display of "signs and wonders" in the primitive Church, constitutes one great distinction between their case and ours[1]: but this distinction being acknowledged, we should consider attentively on whom, and for what purposes, these miraculous gifts were bestowed. For it is not unnatural, nor I believe uncommon, to regard the persons who were thus gifted, as holier, and more highly-favoured of God, than Christians of the present day;—as *Saints*, in some different sense or degree from any thing that we are required or allowed to become[2]. But an examination of the case will plainly show, that we have no reasons for regarding the Christians thus gifted as having any such advantage over us. It is not necessary to enumerate and discuss the several kinds of extraordinary gifts; it is plain that they were not such as can be supposed to have

[1] For it is not necessary at present to enter into an examination of the false pretensions of some impostors and enthusiasts, who have professed to work sensible miracles.

[2] See Sermon on *Christian Saints*.

been bestowed for the direct benefit of the possessor. The gift of tongues, for instance, or of prophecy, or of healing the sick, could not, of themselves, and immediately, conduce to the salvation of the persons thus gifted. But more than this; they did not even afford *proof* that such persons were completely acceptable to God, and in a safe state in respect of their salvation; for, strange as it may appear to us, there is no possibility of doubting that several of them not only incurred the Apostle's severe rebuke for their misconduct, but, among the rest, were censured for a vain and contentious display of these very miraculous endowments. They showed a carnal mind, not only while possessed of extraordinary spiritual gifts, but even in the very employment of those gifts.

It appears probable, indeed, that the Apostles (who alone had this power[1]) conferred some extraordinary gift or other on *every one*, without exception, of the converts who came in their way, as a token and pledge of their being in truth a holy People to the Lord. At least, no mention is made of their bestowing these gifts on some and not on others; and certainly, whether they made any selection or not, they did not, as we plainly find, confine the gifts to such as it was foreseen would make a right use of them.

For what purpose bestowed.

For what purpose then were these gifts bestowed? Principally, we may conclude, for these three: 1st, for the satisfactory conviction and assurance of the minds of the possessors; 2dly, for the propagation of the religion; and, 3dly, for the edification of the Church.

And, First, Some external sensible operations of the Spirit must have been highly important at least, to satisfy the minds of the first Christians of his actual presence among them. They had so far shaken off their Jewish and Heathen prejudices (prejudices which we of the present day can hardly bring ourselves adequately to estimate) as to receive the religion

[1] Acts viii. 16, xix. 6. Rom. i. 11, &c.

of Christ crucified, "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." They had acknowledged that the Eternal God, the Author and Ruler of the Universe, had been manifested in the flesh, incarnate in an obscure, despised, and persecuted peasant, who had been executed as one of the vilest of criminals; and on being baptized into this faith, they were further required to believe that they were thus "born again of water and of the Holy Spirit,"—that He, the same all-present God, dwelt in an especial manner in the Church, of which they were become members, as in a most holy Temple, and was ever at hand to sanctify and guide them. "Know ye not," says Paul, "that ye are the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in you?" Now all this was so opposite to all their former notions,—so strange to all their habits of thought, that they might well need some special assurance of such a doctrine as this last;—some support against the uneasy doubts and suspicions which might suggest the question, "Is the Lord among us, or not?" And such an assurance was graciously afforded them in the sensible testimony of his presence which God displayed, by conferring powers manifestly miraculous[1]. Those, for instance, who received the gift of speaking in, or interpreting, a language they had never learned, could not suspect that they had been deceived by a false teacher, or that they were under the delusion of a heated imagination: they would have ground for undoubting confidence, therefore, that they were indeed born of the Spirit, and living stones of that holy Temple, not made with hands, in which He resides. Not, however, be it observed, that they were to regard their extraordinary gifts as the only, or as the most important, *instance* of spiritual influence, but as the *proof* and pledge of it: the truly important benefit was, the sanctification by the Spirit, with a view to eternal life; the miraculous power was the seal and the earnest of that benefit,—the sign and notification, as it were, that the treasure had been bestowed,—not the treasure itself.

[1] Hinds's *History*, &c. Vol. I. 227.

Secondly, These extraordinary gifts were needful in various ways for the propagation of Christ's religion; both to furnish those who preached it with credentials, as it were, from heaven, to prove the divine origin of the religion, and also to enable all nations to "hear in their own tongues the wonderful works of God."

Thirdly, divers extraordinary gifts (probably those designated as the "word of wisdom," "the word of knowledge," and "the word of prophecy") were evidently needful for the edification of the infant Church;—for the supply of instruction, both in doctrines and in moral duties, to those whose divine Master had not left behind Him (like Moses) a book, containing the principles of christian faith and practice, but had left, instead, the promise of his Spirit, who should "lead them into all [the] truth."

Such, principally, appear to have been the peculiar wants, and such the peculiar supply of those wants, in the infant Church. We have the records of inspiration in the writings of the Apostles and their followers, which supersede the necessity of inspiration in ourselves: we have the history of their miracles preserved, which, together with the result of the miracles,—the establishment and existence, at this day, of the religion,—afford a sufficient evidence of its truth, to all who are open to conviction; since experience,—now, long experience,—has proved that all attempts to account for its establishment by human means, are vain. And as the blaze of the pillar which guided the Israelites in the wilderness, and proved to them the divine presence among them, was withdrawn when they were sufficiently convinced of that presence, and, as it were, familiar with the belief that the Lord was among them as their Protector and King,—the manifestation of "the glory of the Lord" being thenceforward enclosed within the most holy place,—so the outward and sensible marks of God's presence in his Church were gradually withdrawn, when sufficient evidence had been afforded of that presence; which is still not less real or less effectual than

before; and which is no longer miraculously displayed, only because it has been already sufficiently proved[1].

When and how withdrawn.

The extraordinary gifts were probably withdrawn *gradually*, in proportion as the structure, of which they were the temporary support, gradually acquired consistency. We have, accordingly, nothing of sufficient authority recorded on the subject: indeed, much has come down to us respecting miracles, pretended to have been wrought long after the Apostolic age, which we have good reason for regarding as fabulous. The Sacred Writers, however, furnish us with grounds for at least a highly probable conjecture. It was through the laying on of the hands of *the Apostles only*, that extraordinary gifts were for the most part conferred; as may be proved from several parts of the New Testament, particularly the account in the Acts (chap. viii.) of the preaching of the Gospel by Philip the Evangelist to the Samaritans; who were afterwards favoured with a visit, chiefly, as it appears, for this express purpose, by the Apostles Peter and John. And the same may be collected from the opening of the Epistle to the Romans. Such then being the mode in which, exclusively, miraculous powers were conveyed, (with no exception, apparently, except the case of Cornelius and his household; for which there was an obvious reason,) the result must have been, that when all the Apostles had terminated their course on earth, all the channels must have been stopped through which this stream had hitherto flowed; and as the last generation dropped off, one by one, of such as had thus been gifted, this extraordinary manifestation of the Spirit gradually became extinct.

Extraordinary, and ordinary operations of the

§ 5 These extraordinary endowments, then, constitute one important difference between the early Christians and ourselves; but the corre-

[1] I am indebted for this remark, and for several others in the present Essay, to that most interesting and useful work, Hinds's *History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity*; first published in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*.

sponding point of *resemblance* is one of far higher importance: for we have no reason to suppose that that spiritual influence, which is conferred for the benefit of the individual Christian,—for his moral improvement and purification—for his support and guidance in the road to eternal life,—is bestowed in any less degree on sincere Christians, at the present day, than formerly. Now this surely is of incomparably higher importance than the miraculous gifts we have been speaking of. These last without the other,—without, that is, the proper use having been made of the other,—would be utterly worthless. The sanctifying influence of the Spirit, if we so walk after it as to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, hath the "end of everlasting life." "Many," says our Saviour, "shall say in that day, Lord, we have in thy name cast out demons[1], and in thy name done many mighty works; then will I say unto them, I know you not; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity" ..... And again, "In this rejoice not, that the demons are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

Spirit compared.

And Paul, in like manner, when he has been enumerating and comparing together the various extraordinary spiritual gifts, which had been a subject of emulation and dissension among the Corinthian Christians, concludes by utterly depreciating all of them in comparison of that which he calls a "more excellent way." This he designates by the word Agapé; which in most places is rendered "love," but in the passage in question "charity." It appears, however, to have been employed in this place to denote collectively all the sanctifying efficacy,—all of what we call the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit; this gift being at once the great proof and instance of Christ's *love* to his Church,—the ground of the *love* of Christians towards their Master, and also the bond of their brotherly *love* towards each other, not as fellow-creatures

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1 The Devil (Διαβολος) is used as a designation of Satan, and, of course, always in the *singular*: the plural, which has been injudiciously rendered Devils, is Demons (Δαιμόνια). See Lectures on *Good and Evil Angels*.

merely, but as fellow-members of Christ's body. The circumstance of the Apostle's setting Agapé above faith and hope (πίστις and ἐλπὶς) not merely as the greatest of the three, but as *including* the other two, because it "*hopeth* all things, and *believeth* all things," (πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα πιστεύει) seems to indicate that he was not in this case confining his view to christian benevolence alone: and if any one will compare the fruits of ἀγάπη, as enumerated in the 13th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, with "the fruits of the *Spirit*," in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians[1], in the original, he will perceive such a striking coincidence in the Greek words employed in the two passages, (much more striking than an English translation exhibits,) as will leave little doubt that the same train of thought was in the writer's mind in both instances[2]."

It may appear superfluous, however, to adduce scriptural proofs of what is in itself so obvious, as the superior value of sanctifying grace to miraculous endowments. But as long as language is employed by mankind to express their thoughts, there will always be a danger of their thoughts being influenced by language; and unless an especial attention is directed to this danger, the best chosen expressions will ever be liable insensibly to become a snare to us. The *ordinary* and the *extraordinary* operations of the Holy Spirit have been very fitly so termed; but these words are likely, if we are not on our guard against the danger, to suggest to us, gradually and imperceptibly, an erroneous idea. *Extraordinary* abilities place a man much above one of *ordinary;* extraordinary merit is something much greater and better than ordinary; and the like in many other cases. Such an employment, therefore, of those words, is apt to lead men insensibly to form an indistinct notion of some very superior advantage possessed by those endowed with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; especially as the

[1] Compare also these passages with Rom. v. 5, and xv. 30.

[2] See Hinds's *History of the Rise and Progress*, &c. Vol. II. p. 221.

title of *saints* is commonly applied in Scripture to the early *Christians*, as equivalent to that title: while by us it is limited to a few of the most eminently pious that are recorded[1]. If one were even to hint at the possibility of any man's becoming, in the present day, as perfect a Christian as one of the Apostles, —of any set of Christians now, attaining an equality with the best of those primitive Christians,—becoming Saints in as high a degree as those who are usually so called,—the very idea would be reprobated by many persons as an almost impious presumption; though, in fact, there is much more presumption in expecting God's eternal favour, while we are *content* to remain inferior.

Not that men deliberately assent to the proposition, that the power of working miracles is a better thing than a pure and holy mind; nor that they can be ignorant, if they are but moderately versed in Scripture, of the recorded imperfections

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[1] The application (among Protestants) of the title "Saint," in the present day, seems somewhat anomalous. It is never applied to the indisputably *holy* (sancti) and even inspired persons who lived under the Jewish dispensation; such as Moses, David, Daniel, &c., nor is it limited to such Christians (viz. the Apostles and Evangelists) as were confessedly *inspired;* for Protestants commonly speak of Saint Jerome, Saint Augustine, &c., without attributing inspiration to them; nor again is it considered allowable to characterise by that title such men of later days as appear to us eminent for christian knowledge and virtue; as, for instance, the chief promoters and martyrs of the Reformation. All this surely tends to foster the notion that in the *earlier* ages of Christianity, some men at least were able to attain a higher degree of christian holiness than any one can hope for, or need strive for, now.

If we should adopt the system of having regularly enrolled in a list or canon the names of all who are to be designated "Saints," taking that title to imply one whose merits entitle him to be invoked as an Intercessor for others,—and claiming for ourselves an infallible judgment as to who did or did not answer to this description,—then, no one would be at a loss when to apply the title of "Saint." The system would be at least consistent and intelligible, though wholly without Scriptural warrant.

I would suggest, however, to Protestant preachers the importance of frequently reminding their hearers, at least the middle and lower classes, *i. e.* a large majority of most congregations, that it is a mistake (and I believe it to be a very common one) to suppose that the admonitions and exhortations which the Apostles address to "Saints," do not concern, or do not equally concern, Christians in the present day; or that they are "not expected to be Saints." To assume that title indeed as *distinguishing* them from their fellow-Christians, is most presumptuous; but the Gospel promises are limited to those who live "as becometh Saints." See Sermon on *Christian Saints*.

of many thus gifted, even in their manner of exercising these very gifts; but the use of the word *extraordinary*, together with the perceptible and striking character of these endowments, and our habit of prizing the most highly what is *rare*, tend to leave a sort of vague impression on the mind, of some pre-eminent sanctity in those who were partakers of them, above what is attainable in the present day. The splendid accompaniment which testified to them the reality of the spiritual influence bestowed, is apt to enhance in our minds the value of the benefit thus attested, above that which is still placed within the Christian's reach. But if we attentively consider the case, we shall be convinced that the Lord has not given to the one class of Christians any advantage over the other, in that which tends to the spiritual welfare of the individual Christian, and leads to the salvation of his soul;—that his promise to be with his Church always, and to dwell spiritually in the hearts of those who love Him and "keep his saying," extends equally to all who equally strive to fulfil that, the condition of it;—and that our situation resembles that of the primitive Christians in all that is essential, and differs from it only in circumstances which were not only temporary, but comparatively unimportant.

The early Christians compared with those of the present day in respect of the signs *of the gifts bestowed on each.*

§ 6 Hitherto I have been comparing together the case of the early Christians and our own, principally with a view to the *intrinsic character of the spiritual gifts themselves* that were promised. I shall proceed (according to the division mentioned, § 3) to offer some remarks on the *signs* by which the two classes of gifts—the influence of the Spirit in these two modes of operation, the extraordinary, and the ordinary,—are, respectively, to be recognized and ascertained. We shall hence be led to perceive some further points of difference and of resemblance, between the condition of the first Christians and our own; and may thus be more effectually guarded against each of those

opposite errors which are but too prevalent; that of neglecting or depreciating those inestimable gifts, which *are* placed within our reach; and that of pretending to, or expecting, such as are not promised.

Faith required in the indications of power to work miracles.

When our Lord said to his disciples, "If ye have *Faith*, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done," it is plain that the Faith, which in this, and in several other passages, He was inculcating on them, is not to be understood of mere belief in Jesus as the Messiah, or in the doctrines of his religion; or of trust, generally, in divine power and goodness. It evidently has reference to miraculous powers, such as are not bestowed on all Christians; though Faith, in another sense, is required of all. But in this and other declarations of like import, there can be little doubt that our Saviour had in view, *confidence in those admonitions and injunctions which his disciples and many others of the early Christians from time to time received, authorizing and empowering them to work certain miracles.* Their extraordinary gifts were not (as those of Christ Himself were) at their own command. Even Paul, who performed so many mighty works, and, among others, possessed the gift of healing in a high degree, yet was not always permitted to exert this gift, even in favour of his dearest friends[1]. A special commission seems to have been requisite to enable them to exercise their delegated powers. And this was conveyed to them,—their commission and call to perform miracles was announced to them,—in various ways. During our Lord's abode on earth in the flesh, He, Himself, whose authority they could not doubt, uttered commands to this purpose with his own lips. Besides the general commission given to the Apostles and to the Seventy, we find Him on one occasion giving a precise direction to Peter to cast a

[1] See 2 Tim. iv. 20.

hook into the sea, and to take the fish that first came up, in whose mouth he should find the piece of money (a Stater) which the exigency required: in another instance, He, at the request of the same Apostle, commanded him to come and meet Him on the surface of the water. Peter seems to have well understood that his Master's command was at once *requisite* and *sufficient* to enable him to tread the waves without sinking. But even after he had begun to experience the efficacy of that command, his faith was shaken by alarm, and he began to sink, and was reproached by his Master for his doubts. The faith in which he was in this instance found deficient, seems to have been precisely that which our Lord on other occasions so earnestly inculcated[1].

After our Lord's ascension, some other kind of indication must have been given, by which those who were on each occasion authorized to work any miracle, might know that they *were* thus empowered. A species of revelation, in short, must have been bestowed, informing them what they were enabled and required to perform; and in this revelation they were required to have a full faith. Whatever mode may have been, in each case, employed for conveying this revelation, the indication given must always have been something in which they could not be mistaken—something as free from all doubt or suspicion as the words which they heard Jesus utter while with them; since otherwise, this unhesitating faith could not reasonably have been required of them. It must have been something, therefore, which could not possibly be confounded with any suggestions of their own minds.

This is a point concerning which we have no precise statements in Scripture; but the nature of the case puts it, I think, beyond a doubt, that the intimations or signs we are speaking of, must always have been accompanied by, or connected with, something *sensibly* miraculous. For otherwise we must suppose the disciples to have been left exposed to a double danger;

[1] See Lectures on the *Apostles*.

that of mistaking any remarkable dream, or impression on their waking minds, from natural causes, for a communication from the Spirit; in which case they would have given faith to a delusion, and have been disappointed in their expectations, contrary to our Lord's express promise: and that of mistaking, on the other hand, some heavenly communication for an ordinary dream or thought; in which case they would have failed in faith without any fault of their own. God certainly would not leave his servants in any such uncertainty; and they could not possibly be secured from it in any way but by the intervention of sensible miracles.

I have said, however, that the intimation in question must be either accompanied by, or *connected with*, some sensible miracle, because such a proof to the party concerned, of his not being deluded, as would be necessary in the *first instance*, might be dispensed with afterwards, when some particular mode of communication had been once stamped, as it were, with the signature of divinity, by some plainly miraculous accompaniment[1]. A particular sort of internal sensation, for instance, or mental emotion, which a man might experience, however strikingly different it might be from his ordinary feelings, he would be very rash in regarding as a signal of inspiration; since he could not possibly tell that it was not a symptom of disease, or of some other natural change; but if he experienced something of this kind in immediate connexion with a miraculous phenomenon, to which his senses, and those of others, could testify, the recurrence of this peculiar sensation or perception afterwards, would then be of itself justly regarded by him as a heaven-sent intimation. For instance, a man may dream, or, if in an excited state of mind, may fancy, that he hears a voice addressing him, when there is no such thing; but when Paul, on his road to Damascus, was struck to the ground, and blinded by a blaze of light, he thus received the assurance of a sensible miracle; then it was that he heard him-

[1] Hinds's *History*, &c. Vol. I. p. 187.

self addressed in the awful voice of the Lord Jesus. He afterwards, as he tells us, received from Him, at various times, revelations concerning the Gospel. Now if, as is most probable, this revelation was communicated to him by that same voice,—(even though unaccompanied by the supernatural light)—a voice which could not but be strongly impressed on his memory,—he would be in no more danger of delusion, than any of us, in holding communication with a well-known friend.

Again, when two of the disciples met with their Master lately risen from the grave, as they were going to Emmaus, their senses were at first preternaturally obscured, so that they did not recognize Him; but they seem to have experienced, while He was talking with them, a certain remarkable inward sensation, not noticed by them at the time, which they described by their "hearts burning within them." Now this may indeed have been no more than a natural and ordinary emotion, elicited by the interesting character of the discourse they were hearing: it *may*, however, have been something peculiar: and the remarkable circumstances of the case (especially their eyes being "holden that they should not know Him,") render this not at all improbable; especially, since, for the reasons just above given, there was a manifest *need* of their experiencing some peculiar and perfectly new sensation. It is certainly not impossible; and therefore, at any rate, we may frame such a supposition for illustration's sake. Suppose then, as is at least conceivable, this were a sensation altogether different from anything they had ever before experienced; its recurrence on any subsequent occasion, would be justly regarded by them, from the miraculous circumstances accompanying its first occurrence, as a token of their Lord's presence, though unseen, and a notice that they were to regard as a communication from his Spirit, the ideas conveyed to their minds through this vehicle.

Whether in this particular instance the fact were, or were not, such as I have supposed, makes no difference to the present argument; the object being only to illustrate my meaning[1]. It

[1] See *Elements of Rhetoric*. Part I. chap. iii. § 3.

is worth observing, however, that our Lord must have had *some* design in thus presenting Himself to his disciples invisible;—invisible that is, *as* their Master, Jesus:—and his design, or at least part of it, *may* have been, and was likely to have been, to teach them the meaning of a certain peculiar internal impression, denoting his presence in the Spirit. If so, the *sensation*, and its *peculiarity*, their own consciousness would testify; its *meaning* would be explained to them by their Lord's afterwards opening their eyes, so that they knew who it was that had been with them.

But whenever (as has often been the case with those of an enthusiastic temperament in later times) we find a person strongly *suspecting* that he has received a revelation, or fully convinced of it, from feeling (as they sometimes express it) a certain thought forcibly borne in upon his mind, we may be quite sure that he is deluding himself. God would never leave any doubt, or at least any reasonable ground for doubt, on the mind of any one to whom He might think fit to impart a revelation; He doubtless never did, nor ever will, communicate any one of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, without attesting, to the person or persons concerned, its reality, by the stamp of some sensible miracle.

The Apostle Paul, accordingly, we find *enabled* to distinguish, and *careful* to distinguish, the fullest convictions of his own understanding from divine revelations. During his last journey to Jerusalem that is recorded in the Acts, he was strongly impressed with the expectation that he should there close his career by a violent death. He took leave of the Elders of Ephesus with an assurance of his complete conviction that they should see his face no more; but he knew that this his conjecture (which, all things considered, was a very probable one, though the event, we have every reason to believe, did not agree with it) was merely a conjecture, and not a revelation. He had received a divine admonition to take this journey, and also a warning of approaching persecutions; but the ultimate event was as yet hidden from him: "Behold,

I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, *not knowing* the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city[1] that bonds and afflictions abide me." (Acts xx. 23.)

An admirable instance of this Apostle's care, may be seen in 1 Cor. vii. Any such directions as he *might have been supposed* to deliver on divine authority, on points whereon he had received "no commandment from the Lord," he is careful, (though he could not but wish his advice to be followed) to point out as merely the suggestions of his own judgment. In points unconnected with religion, such as the directions he gives about bringing his cloak and his books from Troas, as it would be absurd to suppose any inspiration, so there was no need that he should disavow it.

And this applies to such purely historical passages in the Sacred Writers as involve no religious doctrine or precept. It is childish therefore to allege errors, real or imaginary, of this nature, as reasons for doubting either the truth of Christianity, or the inspiration of our Sacred Writers. If indeed they can be proved to have written like men so ill-acquainted with the time, places, and occurrences, they speak of, as to show that they could not really have been what they profess, this is an objection of a different kind; and on this question we may safely join issue. But when we are told of a blind man healed by Jesus, according to one Evangelist, (Mark x. 46) as He was going *out of* Jericho, and according to another (Luke xviii. 35) as He was coming *into* Jericho, it seems obvious that one of the two was mistaken as to this circumstance;—a circumstance so utterly insignificant, that it would be extravagant to expect that the Holy Spirit should interfere to correct the mistake. And any one who should, on such a ground, deny the occurrence of the miracle, or the general fidelity of the writers, would be acting on a principle which, if adhered to in ordinary life, would be regarded as a symptom of utter mental imbecility.

[1] That is, "in every city I meet with persons prophetically inspired to declare this."

There are other points again in which we could have no ground for conjecturing, *from the nature of the case*, whether supernatural guidance took place or not: as, for example, when the Apostle Paul changed his first design of going into Bithynia, and proceeded to Troas, there is no reason why this alteration of plan might not have been regarded as the result of his own natural judgment, but that we are expressly told that "the Spirit suffered them not" to enter Bithynia; (Acts xvi. 6, 7.) In this case therefore either there was a supernatural interference, or the writer is guilty of a direct falsehood. This is a distinction most important to be remembered, as it has been overlooked by eminent writers. Many of the enactments of the Mosaic law again, are, in themselves, such as we might conceive to have been framed by the natural wisdom of Moses; and his detaining the Israelites forty years in the wilderness, is not a measure on which we could pronounce, from internal evidence, that it could not have been the result of his own judgment. But when we find him distinctly declaring that he had received express commands from the Lord on these points, no alternative remains but either to admit that these were divine appointments, or to impute to the author a deliberate imposture.

Inspirations, however, and other miraculous gifts, we have (as has been already observed) no reason to expect in these days. Not, however, that we are authorized to assert confidently that nothing of the kind ever will recur; but thus far we *may* be confident, that if it does, it will be accompanied by sufficient evidence to distinguish clearly a miraculous interposition from imposture or delusion.

And it is important to observe, that one who rashly gives heed to such impostures or delusions is so far from being chargeable with erring through *excess* of *faith*, that he has in reality forfeited all claim to the praise of faith as a christian virtue; since he plainly shews that even what is true in his belief is received by him not *because* it is *true*, but because it agrees with some fancies or prejudices of his own; and that he

is right, where he *is* right, only by chance. Having violated the spirit of the first Commandment, by regarding what is human with the veneration due to that only which is divine, his worship, even of the true God, becomes an abomination. He has "set up idols in his heart," (see Ezek. xiv.) and the Lord, the *jealous* God, will "set his face against that man."

Equality, in the most important point, between the primitive and the present Church.

§ 7 The signs, then, by which the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were announced, constitute (as well as those gifts themselves) a point of difference between the early Christians and their successors. There is a resemblance, and as we have every reason to conclude, an equality, between the condition of the infant Church and our own, in respect of that far more important point, the ordinary grace of the Holy Spirit operating in the sanctification of the heart. What then is the sign of *this* gift?—the token by which we may be assured of "God's working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure?" *This* operation of the Spirit, there is every reason to believe, not only is, but *always* was, *imperceptible;* and undistinguishable, except by its fruits, from the ordinary workings of the human mind. For if it was suggested to the mind of one of the first Christians, that he ought to do this or that, and suggested in such a manner (which sometimes was the case) as to afford him a satisfactory assurance of an immediate command from the Holy Ghost, this would clearly be a case of *revelation*, and, consequently, would belong to the other class of spiritual gifts;—not to that which we are now considering. But we may be sure that they were not, even the most highly gifted of them, thus guided by immediate revelation in *all* the actions of their lives; but were left to work out their "own salvation with fear and trembling;" though still encouraged to do this by the assurance that "God wrought in them." They were accordingly not uniformly *infallible;* for we find a dissension arising between Paul and Barnabas; nor was this settled by any miraculous interposition, or authoritative

declaration of the Spirit, to either of them. And again, we find Paul withstanding and censuring Peter; but at the same time using *arguments* to convince him of his error: not charging him with having wilfully rebelled against any express immediate revelation respecting the particular act in question.

In fact, the early Christians could hardly have been *moral agents*, if they had not been left watchfully to regulate their own conduct according to the best of their judgment, but had in every case recognized the immediate dictates of the Holy Spirit forbidding or enjoining each action of their lives. And yet they were taught that in *all* their conduct the assistance of God's Spirit was requisite, and was promised to them; our Lord Himself told them that without Him they "could do nothing;" and the Apostle's encouragement to them to work out their own salvation is, "it is God that worketh in you."

But how then were they,—and how are we,—to know what are these suggestions of the sanctifying Spirit? Our Lord Himself seems to instruct us that we are to judge by the *effects*, when He says, "the wind (πνεῦμα) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born (τοῦ πνεύματος) of the Spirit." He here seems to have in view the ordinary and universal operations of the Holy Spirit,—those which extend to "*every one* that is born of the Spirit," without which, "*no one* can enter into the kingdom of Heaven." And as we judge of the direction of any wind that blows (though itself invisible) by its effects,—by the *direction* in which it impels the bodies moved by it,—so, we must decide whether we are in each instance influenced by God's Holy Spirit, or by our own corrupt desires and the Spirit of Evil, by observing the direction in which we are impelled; whether to holiness or to sin,—towards a conformity, or an opposition, to the example of our great Master, the word of his inspired servants, and the moral law which is written on our conscience, though the characters be so far obscured as not to be traced without diligent study. The Apostle, in like manner, when

exhorting his converts to be "led by the Spirit," and to "walk after the Spirit," evidently refers them to a similar test, by enumerating the principal of the *fruits* of the Spirit, and contrasting them with "the works of the flesh," which, he says, "are manifest."

From these considerations it will appear how much those are in error, who imagine that such as have attained a very high degree of christian perfection, and are eminently under the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, will be able distinctly to perceive, by a peculiarity of immediate sensation, and thus to distinguish, from their own natural thoughts, the suggestions of the Holy Ghost. If this his ordinary operation, —this grace which guides and assists the Christian "to will and to do what is well-pleasing to God," *always was* (as there seems good reason to conclude) insensible, we may be well assured that it always will be so. As, on the one hand, even the lowest of the extraordinary spiritual gifts alluded to by Paul must always have been accompanied with a distinct manifestation of its superhuman origin, so as to prevent the possibility of its being mistaken for an exercise of any natural power; so, on the other hand, even the very highest degree of purifying grace, is, and always was, undistinguishable from the exercise of the natural powers, except by the holiness which is the result. The "carnal mind," and the "spiritual mind," are to be known respectively, by "the works of the flesh," and the "fruits of the Spirit." It is, 1st, by the inclinations of our hearts; 2dly, by our deliberations towards the accomplishment of our wishes; and, 3dly, by the actions which are the result of these, that we must know what spirit we are of; for it is from God that "*all* holy *desires*, all good *counsels*, and all just *works* do proceed."

Another error, opposite to the one just considered, is that of those who acknowledge, in *general terms*, the existence and the necessity of the ordinary operations of the Spirit, but explain them away in each particular case; and thus completely nullify the doctrine. They allow that Christians are

to expect the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost; but each separate work in which this divine agency can possibly operate, they attribute exclusively and entirely to some other cause. If a man resist temptation, they attribute this to his sense of the folly, and danger, and sinfulness, of yielding to it; and thence deny that spiritual influence was concerned in the case. If he improve in religious knowledge, they attribute this, exclusively, to his diligence in learning, and to the advantage of good instruction; and, accordingly, contend that there is no need in such a case to suppose spiritual influence concerned. If he does any act, or entertains any sentiment, which right reason would approve, they regard this as a proof that to right reason alone it is to be referred. And in this way they exclude, one by one, every possible instance in which the *ordinary* grace of the Spirit *can* operate; for anything which could *not* be traced to any natural cause, would clearly be miraculous. But a doctrine which is true generally, cannot be false in every particular instance. In fact, what we mean by the ordinary operation of the Holy Spirit, is his operation through second causes,—his aid to our endeavours,—his blessing upon the means of grace. We are taught to pray for our daily bread as God's gift, though it is not, like Manna, showered miraculously from the skies; and every christian thought, and word, and deed, is no less "from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights," though it come not accompanied with fiery tongues and the "sound of a mighty wind." Its christian goodness is the sign of its spiritual origin.

It is perhaps hardly worth while to notice an objection I have heard, that every operation of the divine Spirit must be an interruption of the course of nature, and *miraculous;* and that consequently I have all along been teaching (though I have said the direct reverse) that miracles are to be expected in the present day; for if no miracles, it is said, are to be looked for, no spiritual influence at all is to be looked for. But this surely is little better than a verbal cavil. If this sense of the word "Miracle" is to be adopted, then I do teach (as

indeed every one must, whether sincerely or not, who recites the formularies of our Church) that miracles have not ceased, and that we are still to hope and pray (as in the Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Easter) that by God's "holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by his merciful guiding may perform the same." But this does not imply what is, perhaps the most properly, — certainly, the most usually,—termed a "Miracle;" viz.: a sensible miracle,—an *extraordinary* and perceptible *interruption* of the general course of God's providence. I have all along been speaking of the aid now to be looked for as the "ordinary" operation of the Holy Spirit,—as not "sensible," but to be known only by its fruits—and as so far from being an "interruption," that it may be considered as rather forming a *part*, of the course of Providence, as far as Christians are concerned: to all of whom this spiritual aid is offered.

At least, if this offer is *not* made in Scripture, I cannot see what can be learned with any certainty, or indeed how any thing at all can be learned, from the writings of the Apostles. For if we are in this case to reject or to explain away their most explicit and repeated declarations, on the ground that we have no *sensible* proof of this divine agency, this is to make *their word go for nothing;* since if they announced to us any phenomenon to which our senses did bear testimony, we should believe it on *that* ground, not from faith in the declarations of the Sacred Writers. But he who is content to be taught by them, must, I think, accede to our Church's doctrine as to the reality of a spiritual influence not sensibly or properly miraculous, but known only by its effects to be the work of Him to whom we must apply to "put into our minds good desires, and to bring the same to good effect."

Sign of the Christian's admission to the privilege of spiritual guidance.

§ 8 These "fruits of the Spirit" then, are, and ever were, the criterion to Christians of their being "led by the Spirit." The sign of their having a *claim* to this spiritual guidance—

to the ordinary operation of the Spirit—of their being admitted to a share in the *offer* of this grace, I cannot conceive to be, or ever to have been, any other than their baptism into the christian faith. There are some, indeed, who represent baptism as a sign only of admission into the visible Church, and not, necessarily, of spiritual regeneration. But the shortest and most decisive answer to these persons appears to be, that they are making a distinction without a difference. Such as the Church is described in Scripture, viz. "as the body of Christ Jesus," as the "Temple of the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in it," to speak of admittance into this Church, without an admission to the privileges bestowed on it, seems a contradiction in terms. The promises of Christ are made to the *Society* of which He is the Head; and to individuals, not as *men*, but as *members* of that Society. If (in the case of temporal goods) any one is admitted a member of any endowed Society, he is thereby admitted to a share of its revenues: it would be a contradiction to disjoin them. The visible Church of Christ is a Society endowed by Him with the richest privileges: but then, it rests with each member of that Society (as it does with the members of a human Society) to *avail* himself aright of those privileges, or to neglect or abuse them.

The case of Christians is in this respect analogous to that of God's People of old. (*See* Essay III.) All the Israelites were admitted into covenant with the Lord; and being made thus his "peculiar," "holy," and "elect" People were entitled to *all* the privileges and promises of that covenant; though it rested with each individual to make a good or an ill use of these advantages. The Lord was ready to perform his part, if they would perform theirs; but if they refused this, still they were not allowed to draw back from the engagement, but incurred the heavier judgment for their disobedience. The rebellious were not permitted as they desired, "to return into Egypt," but were cut off in the wilderness.

And the *infants* of the Israelites were admitted into this covenant by the rite of circumcision, at the age of eight days;

though they were, of course, then, incapable of *immediately* enjoying or understanding their privileges. If this had been sufficiently attended to, it might have obviated the difficulties that have been raised from the consideration that such as are baptized in infancy cannot be, at once, nor till they become moral agents, actually influenced by the Holy Spirit; whence it has been inferred by some, that we ought to defer baptism till the party is arrived at years of discretion[1].

But after all, there is no more difficulty in the case than in one which occurs every day; that of an infant inheriting an estate. He is incapable, at the time, of using or comprehending the advantage; but still it is *his;* he is not hereafter to *acquire the title and claim* to it; but he will hereafter become capable of understanding his claim and employing his wealth; and he will become responsible at the same time for the use made of it.

Christians in like manner are called upon at their peril, to make the best use of their advantages, as soon as they become capable of understanding them: and if they fail to do this, they are not on that account esteemed as never having been admitted to those advantages, but, on the contrary, incur, on that very ground, the heavier condemnation. What, "know ye not," says the Apostle, "that ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in you? and if any man defile (φθείρει) the temple of God, him will God destroy," (φθερεῖ).

It is then, and ever was, a matter of *faith* to believe in the continual sanctifying presence of God with his Church; and in "the communion (or 'fellowship') of saints," as "the communion[2] of the Holy Ghost;" viz. the participation of all Christians, as far as they will avail themselves of the offer, in the assistance of that Holy Spirit, from which every good and every perfect gift proceeds[3].

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[1] See the concluding Essay in this Volume.

[2] 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

[3] Doubtless one of the objects of our Lord, in the institution of the Eucharist, was to remind Christians of this "communion" or fellowship of the Holy Ghost, and to impress it habitually on their minds. See Note A, at the end of this Essay.

In this respect our case and that of the early Christians coincide. But there is this point of difference between the two; that this was not to them, as to us, the great trial of their faith; because in the infant Church, the extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit served as a visible token to convince them of his actual presence. The same Spirit still resides in the Church; but, like the Shechinah concealed within the Holy of Holies, it is screened from our view: we walk wholly "by faith, and not by sight." They, however, had counterbalancing trials: the fellowship in the Spirit, of Jews and Gentiles;—to the one party the admission of the unclean heathen as fellow-heirs with the favoured children of Abraham;—to the other, the reception of a religion and of a divine Master, from a nation of obscure barbarians, despised and detested for superstition; both that Master and his ministers being rejected and abhorred even by that nation itself:—in short, "Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness," constituted a trial to their faith which we can hardly estimate. The indignities which Jesus suffered, who was thence "esteemed stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,"—the contradiction which the new religion presented to all the fondly-cherished hopes of the Jew, to all that the Gentile most revered in philosophy, and was most attached to in his religion and in his habits of life—the inveterate malice of persecutors,—the scorn and derision of the wisest and greatest,—the censures, entreaties, and lamentations of kindred and friends,—all these, and numberless other circumstances revolting to every prejudice—every feeling—every habit, of the new convert, formed a trial to his faith, of which we can form but a faint idea; and under which it was needful that his gracious Master should support him, by a constant visible display of his presence.

Example of the Apostles to be followed by reversing

§ 9 It is the part of Christians of the present day, on the one hand not to distrust the reality of that presence, because it is no longer

in some points their procedure.

thus miraculously displayed; nor, on the other hand, to require or look for such a miraculous manifestation as God has thought fit no longer to bestow. How we *should* have conducted ourselves, if placed in the circumstances of the primitive Christians, can be known only to the Searcher of hearts; how we *shall* conduct ourselves under the circumstances in which we *are* actually placed,—how we shall withstand our own trials, and make use of our own advantages,—is the point which most concerns us; since of that we shall have to give an account.

And if we would profit by the example of the most eminent of God's servants, we must in some respects reverse their procedure, in conformity with the reversed circumstances in which we are placed. We must endeavour to learn, and to perform, as far as we are able, by our natural powers under the blessing of God's ordinary operations, what the apostles were taught, or were empowered to do, by miraculous gifts: and the instruction *they* derived from their own, or from each other's immediate inspiration, we must seek to obtain in the *records* of that inspiration which they have left us. They could in many instances infer this or that to be right or true, *from its being the suggestion of the Spirit;* which was attested, to themselves and to others, by miracles: we, on the contrary, can only prove anything to be the suggestion of the Spirit, *by its being right and true;* and the evidence of *this*, must be sought in Scripture, —that record of the dictates of the Holy Ghost, which is the appointed standard for deciding what does proceed from the Author of all good. If our life and faith are agreeable to the Gospel, this is the ground of confidence that they are right; and if right, they must come from that sanctifying and enlightening and supporting grace, which alone can raise to life the dead in sin, and purify man's corrupt nature, and effectually open his eyes to the truth, and "strengthen the feeble knees" to walk in God's paths. This spiritual assistance is not (like the other) a proof *on which* to build and support our faith, but is itself a matter of faith;—a truth to be believed on God's

assurances. And those persons, therefore, are in fact *wanting* in faith (of which they often pretend to a pre-eminent degree) who are not satisfied with this assurance, but look for, and pretend to, sensible experiences, which are to afford a direct and decisive demonstration to their minds of their being under spiritual influence: "except they see signs and wonders, they will not believe."

It is very wonderful, as well as most lamentable, that some piously-disposed Christians, should so far deceive themselves, as to claim for themselves, and for others, *inspiration*, in the highest sense, and consequent *infallibility*, without, apparently, any consciousness that they are doing so, because they avoid the use of those *words*. For instance, there are some who represent our Lord's admonition to his Apostles "not to premeditate" when called on to vindicate themselves, as applicable to *all* sincere Christians in every Age. The doctrine may be even found in published books in some repute; not with any attempt to prove it, but taken for granted as self-evident. And yet those who maintain it would be ready probably to disavow all claim to infallibility, and seem not to perceive that they have plainly implied it. For our Lord's injunction is plainly accompanied with that promise. "Take no thought," says He, (Matt. x. 19,) "how or what ye shall speak; FOR it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak: for *it is not ye* that speak, but the *Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.*" If this does not imply inspiration in the sense of infallibility, it would be hard to say what can.

Now claims of this kind, put forth by persons who have no sensibly miraculous confirmations of them to offer, do more hurt to the cause of Christianity than all that can be urged by the most ingenious infidels. Suppose five or six different persons of various persuasions,—one, suppose, a Quaker, another, an Irvingite, another, a Baptist, another, a Methodist, &c., each maintaining that all sincere Christians are enjoined not to premeditate what they shall say in defence of their faith, and are promised that "it shall be given them" what to say

when called on; and suppose each of them to have a confident faith in what he believes to be the true Gospel, and to have earnestly prayed for, and trusted to have received, this promised aid: any one in at all a doubtful state of mind will be likely to say "these men cannot be all right, since they teach different doctrines; but they may be all wrong; and in this they are all agreed, that Christ made a promise to *all* his followers, which, it is manifest, has not been fulfilled." I need not say what conclusion is likely to be the result. And those who are guilty of this most culpable rashness,—not to say, profane presumption,—must be held responsible for having thus put a stumbling-block in a brother's way.

Complete certainty as to the rectitude of our judgments, unattainable.

We are to look then to the Holy Scriptures which the Spirit of Christ inspired, not indeed (according to the notion some have maintained) as constituting the *only* assistance that the Holy Ghost now bestows on the Church, but as constituting the ultimate standard by which we are to *judge* how far we have received and are profiting by that assistance. It is not in these only that He *is present*, but it is by these, as a test, that his presence is, in each case, to be *known*.

It is, indeed, only through the enlightening and supporting grace of the Holy Spirit, that even the Scriptures themselves can be consulted with benefit. If we study them with a mind biassed by any of those numerous prejudices and infirmities which beset our frail nature, we shall receive the heavenly light of God's word through a discoloured medium; and its rays will thence give an unnatural tint to everything on which they are shed. Many different persons, accordingly, have arrived at different conclusions (*all* which consequently could not be correct), though they have applied, apparently at least, the very test that has been recommended: they have compared their opinions or practices with the standard of God's word, and finding them agree, have concluded them to be the suggestions of the Spirit which dictated that word; and yet this agreement has perhaps been (*must* have been, in some

instances) the result of a partial and prejudiced interpretation of Scripture; they may have suffered those opinions and practices to *bend the ruler*[1] by which they were to be measured.

But how, after all (it may be said), is this danger to be completely avoided? Are we not involved in a vicious circle, if we are to judge whether we are under the influence of the Spirit by consulting the Scriptures, and yet cannot, without that influence, interpret aright those very Scriptures? How, in short, are we to arrive at a completely satisfactory decision as to our own sentiments and conduct?

The danger is one against which we never *can* be completely secured in this life: the decisions we attain can never be wholly exempt from all ground for doubt[2]: in other words, we must not expect, with our utmost efforts and prayers, to attain perfect *infallibility*. If we could, this life would hardly be any longer a state of trial. To contend against the difficulty in question, — to labour not only with diligence and patience, but "with fear and trembling" also,—that is, with anxious and humble self-distrust,—is the very task assigned us in this our state of preparation. But, if, while the Christian puts forth all his own powers in this task, he at the same time earnestly and importunately prays for heavenly guidance, and relies with deep humility on Him who alone can crown those efforts with success, he will be continually approaching nearer and nearer to "a right judgment in all things," and to a corresponding perfection of life. For it is the office of the Holy Spirit to lead us into "all *righteousness*," as well as into all truth.

And in referring to and studying the Scriptures, though no infallible interpreter is to be found, or hoped for,—no system of general directions that will absolutely secure us against mistake; yet there are two maxims especially, (already adverted to in these Essays,) which, studiously dwelt upon, and perpetually recalled to our thoughts, will prove a safeguard

[1] Arist. *Rhet.* Book I. chap. i.

[2] See Essay VI. § 10. (First Series.)

against many and various errors. The one is, to remember that in studying the Scriptures we are consulting the Spirit of *Truth;* and therefore must, if we would hope for his aid, search honestly and earnestly *for* the *truth*, not, for a confirmation of our pre-conceived notions, or a justification of the system, or the practice, to which we may be inclined. This maxim is the more frequently transgressed, from men's falsely persuading themselves that they *have* complied with it. The conclusions which they arrive at, they, of course, believe to be true; and thence, from their having, as they suppose, *found* truth, they take for granted that it was for truth they were *seeking*. But a desire to have Scripture on our side is one thing; and a sincere desire to be on the side of Scripture, is another. It is one thing to pray that we may *learn what is* RIGHT; and another thing (though often mistaken for it) to pray that we may *find* OURSELVES *in the right*.

And, finally, in combination with this rule, we should also keep constantly in mind, that, of seeking in Scripture not only for truth, but for *practical* truth, with a view to the improvement of our life and heart[1]. This is an express condition on which spiritual aid in enlightening the understanding is promised: "If any man is[2] willing to *do* the will of God, he shall *know* of the doctrine." We must seek therefore in the Scriptures, by the aid of Him who gave them, not for speculative knowledge respecting the intrinsic nature of God, or of the human soul, but for practical knowledge concerning the *relations* existing between God and the soul of man, that we may be enabled to serve and please Him the better; and that "the inspiration of his Holy Spirit may cleanse the thoughts of our hearts," and fit us for enjoying the more immediate presence of our Master in his triumphant kingdom.

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[1] "Pray for what passeth human skill,
The power God's will to do:
Read then that thou may'st *do* his will,
And thou shalt know it too."—*Bishop Hinds's Poems.*

[2] θέλει.

NOTE TO ESSAY IX.

NOTE A, page 228.

WITH a view to the mere commemoration of our Lord's sacrifice, and expression of our faith in his atonement, the mere *breaking* of the bread, and *pouring out* of the wine in the Lord's Supper, might have been sufficient: but the bread and wine are by Christ's appointment *eaten and drunk*; in conformity with this declaration, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you[1]:" "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, the same *dwelleth in me, and I in him.*" What then is it of which the devout communicants are really partakers, under the outward symbols of bread and wine? Surely, of the Spirit of Christ; for "hereby know we that He *dwelleth in us*, by his Spirit which He hath given us;" and hence, by Paul's expression, that "we are all *made to drink*" (ἐποτίσθημεν, 1 Cor. xii. 13) "into one Spirit."

This obvious interpretation, the Romanists (and afterwards the Lutherans) were led to overlook, partly at least, I conceive, from the habit of keeping too much out of sight the divine Unity, and of regarding the Son and the Holy Ghost too much as distinct Beings; so that to *partake of Christ* must, they thought, be something different from *partaking of the Holy Spirit*. Hence they inferred that the communicants receive the literal, material, body and blood of Christ; and they accordingly boast that they alone interpret the Scripture declarations not figuratively. There is no need to adduce the well-known refutations of this extravagant doctrine; but there is one answer to it, which is usually overlooked, and which goes to overthrow the foundation of it; viz. that if we *could* actually receive into our mouths the very flesh and blood of Christ, this could not, *of itself*, be productive of any benefit to the soul. It might, if God willed it, be the appointed *token* and *means* of our receiving such benefit; even as the water of the pool of Siloam was, of restored sight; but it could not *itself* confer any spiritual advantage any more than water could cure blindness. It must therefore, after all, be in a spiritual and *figurative* sense that Christ says, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed;" if they *were* literally eaten and drunk, they must still be the sign of something else, represented and conveyed by them. So that the

[1] See Hinds's *Catechist's Manual*, p. 265, to the author of which I am indebted for the substance of these remarks.

violence done to Scripture and to reason, for the sake of avoiding a figurative interpretation, does not, after all, even accomplish that object.

The error of transubstantiation the English Church has guarded against most carefully, by declaring that the bread and wine remain unchanged,—that they are only a *sign* of Christ's body and blood,—and that it is only "after a spiritual manner" that his body and blood are received by the faithful. But it would have been better perhaps to have added to this, for the benefit of the unlearned, a statement that the bread and wine not only are *merely a sign*, but are a *sign of a sign:* i.e. that *they* represent our Lord's flesh and blood, and that his flesh and blood again are a sign of something else. This is indeed implied, when it is said that Christ's body and blood are "*spiritually* received," and that it "strengthens and refreshes the *soul;*" for it is manifest that *literal*, *material* flesh and blood cannot be *spiritually* received, or refresh the *soul*. But for the sake of avoiding those vague and confused ideas, which are apt to lead ultimately on the one hand, to something nearly the same as the notion of transubstantiation, or, on the other hand, to the regarding of the Eucharist as a mere memorial, it might have been better to state distinctly what it is that the faithful communicants do really partake of.

To eat and drink the symbols[1] of the Lord's flesh and blood, represents our feasting on the sacrifice;—our being made sharers in the benefits procured by his death, even the "gifts which He received for Men." That which strengthens and refreshes the *soul* of Christians, as bread and wine do Man's body, is "the Spirit of Christ," whereby "He dwelleth in us, and we in Him;" for "it is the *Spirit* that quickeneth; (ζωοποιοῦν) the flesh profiteth nothing." (John vi. 63.) And as it is the soul or spirit of a man that animates (quickeneth) his body, which would otherwise be lifeless; so, Christians, who are, themselves, the figurative Body of Christ, are *quickened*,—receive life and vigour—"strength and refreshment,"—from the Spirit which dwelleth in them; they "are the temple of the Holy Ghost:" "the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit." And since it is *as* members of the holy *community* that individual Christians obtain this gift, of this circumstance they are reminded by their partaking *together* of the Lord's Supper,—"the communion (κοινωνία) of the blood of Christ:" (1 Cor. x. 16,) "we have *all* been in one Spirit, baptized into *one* Body;" (i. e. all admitted by baptism —being born of water and of the Spirit,—into the Church, which is Christ's Body) "and have *all* been *made to drink* into *one* Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 13.)

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1 "Mysteries" is used in the sense of "Symbols" in the second prayer at the close of our Communion Service.

ESSAY X.

ON SELF-DENIAL.

§ 1. MUCH of what is said, in the writings of the Apostle Paul and in other parts of Scripture, concerning christian "self-denial," and again, concerning "mortification,"—and much also that we read in various places relative to "Fasting," have undoubtedly presented to some minds a considerable difficulty: not merely speculative difficulty, but practical, and leading to great diversity of views and of conduct, and sometimes to distressing doubt and perplexity in reference to christian duty.

Mistakes and difficulties as to this point, arising from an inattentive or a prejudiced perusal of Paul and other of the Sacred Writers.

I cannot but attribute great part of the discrepancy and perplexing uncertainty that has arisen both on this and on several other points, to the habit cherished by some persons of reading the Scriptures—assiduously indeed—but without any attentive reflection, and studious endeavour to ascertain the real sense of what they read: concluding that whatever impression is found to be left on the mind after a bare perusal of the words, must be what the Sacred Writers designed. They use, in short, little or none of that care which is employed on any other subject in which we are much interested, to read through each treatise consecutively as a whole;—to compare one passage with others that may throw light on it; and to consider what was the general drift of the author, and what were the occasions, and the persons he had in view.

In fact, the real *students* of Scripture, properly so called, are, I fear, fewer than is commonly supposed. The theological

student is often a student chiefly of some human system of Divinity fortified by *references* to Scripture introduced from time to time as there is occasion. He proceeds — often unconsciously — by setting himself to ascertain, not, what is the information or instruction to be derived from a certain narrative or discourse of one of the Sacred Writers, but what aid can be derived from them towards establishing or refuting this or that point of dogmatic Theology. Such a mode of study surely ought at least not to be exclusively pursued. At any rate, it cannot properly be called a *study of Scripture.*

There is, in fact, a danger of its proving a great *hindrance* to the profitable study of Scripture. For so strong an association is apt to be established in the mind between certain expressions and the *technical* sense to which they have been confined in some theological System, that when the student meets with them in Scripture, he at once understands them in that sense, in passages where perhaps an unbiassed examination of the context would plainly show that such was not the author's meaning. And such a student one may often find expressing the most unfeigned wonder at the blindness of those who cannot find in Scripture such and such doctrines, which appear to him to be as clearly set forth there as words can express; which perhaps they are, on the (often gratuitous) *supposition*, that those words are everywhere to be understood exactly in the sense which he has previously derived from some human system; — a system through which, as through a discoloured medium, he views Scripture. But this is not to take Scripture for one's guide, but rather to make one's self *a guide* to Scripture.

Others again there are who are habitual readers of the Bible, and perhaps of little else; but who yet cannot properly be said to *study* anything at all on the subject of religion; because, as was observed just above, they do not even attempt to exercise their mind on the subject, but trust to be sufficiently enlightened and guided by the mere act of perusal, while their

minds remain in a passive state. And some, I believe, proceed thus, on principle; considering that they are the better recipients of revealed truth the less they exercise their own reason.

But this is to proceed on a totally mistaken view of the real province of Reason. It would indeed be a great error to attempt *substituting* for Revelation, conjectures framed in our own mind, or to speculate on matters concerning which we have an imperfect knowledge imparted to us by Revelation, and could have had, without it, none at all. But this would be, not to use, but to abuse, our rational faculties. By the use of our senses, which are as much the gift of the Creator as anything else we enjoy—and by employing our reason on the objects around us, we can obtain a certain amount of valuable knowledge. And beyond this, there are certain other points of knowledge unattainable by these faculties, and which God has thought fit to impart to us by his inspired messengers. But *both* the Volumes—that of Nature, and that of Revelation —which He has thought good to lay before us, are to be carefully studied. On both of them we must diligently employ the faculties with which He, the Author of both, has endued us, if we would derive the full benefit from his gifts.

The Telescope, we know, brings within the sphere of our vision much that would be undiscernible by the naked eye; but we must not the less employ our eyes in making use of it: and we must watch and calculate the motions, and reason on the appearances, of the heavenly bodies which are visible only through the telescope, with the same care we employ in respect of those seen by the naked eye.

And an analogous procedure is requisite if we would derive the intended benefit from the pages of inspiration; which were designed not to save us the trouble of inquiring and reflecting, but to enable us, on some points, to inquire and reflect to better purpose;—not to supersede the use of our reason, but to supply its deficiencies[1].

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[1] I have treated more fully on this point in Essay III. § 5. (Fourth Series.)

On those points above alluded to, I cannot but think that a moderate degree of thoughtful study of Scripture,—not taken at random, in detached passages, as if we were consulting the "Sortes Biblicæ," but examined in the same way in which we endeavour to get at the true sense of any author on a subject which we are really anxious to understand,—will enable us, through divine help, to escape those perplexities and errors into which many have fallen.

Warning of Jesus respecting the self-denial, sufferings, and sacrifices, required of his followers, contrasted with what would have been the procedure of any —especially a Jewish— impostor or enthusiast.

§ 2 To begin then with our Lord's own declaration respecting the self-denial required of his followers: we find that, at a time when great multitudes were crowding after Him, in eager expectation of the speedy commencement of the Kingdom of Heaven, "having called the people unto Him, with his disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will[1] come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me: for whosoever will[1] save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it."

The warning He here gives of the trials and sufferings to be encountered and the sacrifices to be made by those who would be truly his disciples, is of a piece with others which He gave from time to time, both to the "People" —the multitudes who were as yet doubting hearers of his discourses,—and to those who had joined the number of his followers.

All parties were agreed in expecting that if He were indeed the Christ, He would shortly enter on a triumphant temporal kingdom, and would reign with his adherents in earthly splendour and prosperity, exempt from all dangers and afflictions.

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[1] The Original has θέλει: "whosoever is *desirous*," &c. It is remarkable that the same words which in Mark are rendered "whosoever *shall* lose," are rendered, in the corresponding passage of Matthew, "whosoever *will* lose." The former is evidently the right rendering of ὃς ἂν ἀπολέσῃ.

Such was, and is to this day, the expectation of the Jews respecting the Messiah's kingdom. This was their interpretation of the Prophecies concerning that kingdom[1]. And their expectation was strengthened by the ancient history of their nation; the Lord having governed them of old by a system of temporal rewards and punishments; promising, and giving, victory, wealth, and worldly peace, to those who served Him faithfully; which promises, and many signal fulfilments of them, we find recorded in the Old Testament.

It is impossible, therefore, to doubt (and this is a circumstance very important to be remarked) that any *impostor* seeking to raise a party among the Jews by professing to be the long-looked-for Messiah, would have been sure to fall in with their expectations, by promising to his followers, triumph over all enemies, and every kind of worldly prosperity: as was in fact what was actually held forth by the many false-christs of whom Jesus prophesied, and who arose not long after.

And an *Enthusiast* would hardly have failed to take the same course. He would have been sure to fancy himself just such a triumphant Messiah as the imagination of all the Jewish People had been so long and so fondly imagining; and would accordingly have had his own day-dreams filled with those visions of temporal success and splendour which had been so long and intimately associated with the idea of the Messiah's Kingdom.

And indeed universally, any impostor or enthusiast will be likely to promise his followers temporal success as a sign of divine favour; as was done by Mahomet, who was probably a mixture of the two characters. But much more would this have been the case with a *Jewish* impostor or enthusiast, considering how deeply rooted, in the Jews, was the notion that

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[1] And there are some who teach that these prophecies are to be fulfilled in that sense; and that, after all, the Jews were right in so understanding them, and in this were only mistaken as to the *time*. See Lectures on a *Future State*. Lect. VII.

victory and worldly prosperity was a mark of divine favour, and would most especially distinguish the promised Christ.

Jesus, on the contrary, laboured to repress all such expectations; and held forth a prospect of persecutions and hardships, such as would, instead of attracting, tend to repel the greater part of his countrymen; not only through the reluctance men feel to encounter dangers and sufferings, but also, besides this, through the "*offence*" (as it is called in the New Testament) —the shock to their prejudices—thus produced, and the consequent difficulty they had in believing that that *could be* the true Kingdom of God, which was so opposite to their expectations[1]. "There went great multitudes with Him," says Luke[2], "and he turned and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife, &c., yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple: and whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. . . . . So likewise whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

We find then Jesus proceeding not only in a different, but in a totally opposite way to that which might have been looked for from an impostor or an enthusiast; discouraging the expectations which either of those characters would have cherished; and holding out such prospects to his followers as would be likely, humanly speaking, to dishearten them; and which in fact must have overthrown the religion altogether if it

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[1] "Thus did the Saviour come 'unto his own, and his own received Him not;' thus was He 'despised and rejected of men;' and thus were the prophecies fulfilled that not only 'the Christ should *suffer*,' but that the very circumstance of his being a sufferer should be interpreted as a proof of divine disfavour: 'We did esteem Him smitten, *stricken of God*, and afflicted; and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him.'"—Essays, p. 293. (Fourth Series.)

[2] Chap. xiv. 25.

had not been supported by supernatural power. And thus a proof is afforded to any plain Christian possessing common sense and an acquaintance with the Bible, that Jesus must have come from God.

No self-inflicted *or gratuitous suffering required of the Disciples of Jesus.*

§ 3 Another important point to be remarked in reference to this part of our Lord's teaching, is, that the "self-denial" He is speaking of consists not in *self-inflicted* sufferings, undergone as acceptable in God's sight,—in sacrifices and privations voluntarily endured without any further object, but merely for their own sake, as a part of christian virtue; or of dangers or death encountered when they might be avoided without any desertion of the christian cause. He is speaking of the hardships and dangers his disciples would have to encounter in *preaching the Gospel;* of the cruelties that would be *inflicted* on them by his enemies *for adhering to Him;* ("if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you,")—of the enmity they would incur "for his Name's sake." But He manifestly says nothing —whatever some Christians may have conjectured as to his *meaning*—of their inflicting on *themselves* any kind of pain, as being, for its own sake, and simply as pain, a laudable service.

Criminals on whom was inflicted the horribly barbarous sentence of crucifixion, were compelled to carry their own "cross" to the place of execution; and again, for minor offences, the Romans often sentenced a criminal simply to carry a cross[1]. And from this it is that Jesus draws his metaphor, "Let him take up his cross and follow me;" that is, let him be prepared to endure patiently whatever sufferings may be *laid on him* in his christian course. The precept is not, it should be observed, "let him bear *a* cross," or "*the* cross," but "*his* cross[2];" *i.e.* that which is *allotted* to him. So

[1] Whence "furcifer," "cross-bearer," was a common term of reproach among the Romans, applied to the vilest characters.

[2] Τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ.

also, in the parables employed of a man going to build, and of a king about to make war, and who do not fail, if they are prudent, to count the cost beforehand, we may observe that the *cost* to be computed is the *unavoidable* expense of the undertaking. They do not regard the expenditure as a thing desirable in itself, and to be sought on its own account, or incurred unnecessarily; but they consider how much it is *requisite* to sacrifice in order to accomplish the object.

And the very *strength* of some of our Lord's expressions,—the hyperbolical and paradoxical form which they often assume —serves, and was doubtless designed to serve, the purpose (in this as in many other cases)[1] of guarding us against mistaking his meaning. If He had bid us merely "hate" riches and ease and comfort, He might have been understood to mean that Christians would be the more acceptable to Him for renouncing private property[2], and exposing their bodies to the sufferings of cold and hunger, and scourging themselves with knotted cords, according to the "discipline" (as it is called), of some fanatics, or, like the Hindoos at this day, plunging into their flesh iron hooks by which they are suspended and violently swung round. But when He says that a man must "hate his father and mother," and all those to whom duty as well as affection most bind him, "yea, and his own life also," we plainly see—since He evidently could not have been enjoining both *unnatural cruelty*, and *suicide*—that He must have been inculcating the duty of being ready to sacrifice both our strongest attachments, and even life itself, when *called on* to do so *in his cause;*—when regard for friends, or love of life, shall stand in the way of our devotedness to Him; when, as it would often happen in the times of persecution, a man was obliged to make choice between the two, and renounce either the Gospel or the most valued goods of this life, and life itself.

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[1] See above. Essay VIII.

[2] See Note at the end of Sermon II. on "leaving all to follow Jesus."

In short, the "self-denial" He required was, a readiness to give up without hesitation anything that might "offend," as the Scripture phrase is; anything that might prove a hindrance, "a stumbling-block" in the path of christian duty. And this He expresses in another place by saying, "If thine eye *offend* thee, pluck it out: . . . if thy right hand *offend* thee, cut it off and cast it from thee." He does not tell us that it is, simply and absolutely, a good thing to part with the eye or the hand,—*i. e.* to sacrifice what we are strongly attached to —merely because the sacrifice is painful; but when some highly-prized object is an *impediment* ["stumbling-block"] in our christian course: in short, when christian duty requires the sacrifice.

Tendency of mankind to attach merit to ascetic self-torture.

§ 4 Such appears to have been, according to the most obvious sense of his words, our Lord's teaching of self-denial. Let us compare this, again, and rather more particularly, with what might have been expected from an impostor or an enthusiast. The most obvious course for such a person to have taken, especially a Jew addressing Jews, would have been (as was remarked above) to promise his followers earthly triumph and prosperity: and if he perceived that it was necessary to prepare them to encounter opposition, he would assure them at least that the struggle would end, if they did but show courage, in temporal victory, glory, wealth, and enjoyment. These things are naturally the objects of human desire: and a promulgator of any religious system that should require little or no self-denial from his followers, and which should promise them, along with the consolations of piety, the free indulgence and gratification of their natural desires—such a man would, with a moderate share of plausible eloquence, be likely to find willing hearers.

But it is very important to remark that there is in mankind another, and a much more strange kind of tendency;—a craving for self-torture;—for self-denial in the sense of sacri-

ficing what is agreeable, and submitting to self-inflicted suffering, simply because it is *painful*, and on the supposition that pain, and especially gratuitous endurance of it, is, in itself, acceptable to God.

To enter fully into the investigation of the causes of this disposition in mankind, would lead into too wide a field of discussion. But there can be no doubt that it arises in great measure from men's observing that there are so many cases in which that which every one perceives to be right conduct, necessarily involves some sacrifice of present gratification. *Painful* toil is often requisite for a man to perform the obvious duty of honestly providing for his family: wounds and death must be encountered in fighting for one's country: riches must on many occasions be sacrificed by one who would preserve his integrity: and the like in many other cases. Now admiration being excited by the *self-denying* fortitude which, in such cases, a virtuous man displays, men are thus led to associate in their minds the ideas of *virtue* and of *pain*, till their admiration is at length transferred to self-denial in itself. Perceiving that Providence has appointed that in so many cases men must, in order to perform their duty, encounter pain without shrinking, they are at length led to conclude that the voluntary endurance of pain, without any ulterior object, must be acceptable to God.

I do not say that this is the sole cause,—but it is evidently one cause—of the notion I am alluding to. Be this however as it may, of the fact there can be no doubt. We find traces of this feeling in almost every Age and Country. We find the ancient Canaanites sacrificing their children to Moloch; and the priests of Baal "cutting themselves *after their manner* with knives and lancets" at his altar. We find the modern pagans of India lacerating their flesh, making vows not to lie down for a certain number of years, but to sleep standing against a tree, or to submit to various other fantastic self-tortures; drowning themselves in the Ganges, burning themselves alive, and practising other modes of self-

immolation. Among the Mahometans again, as well as the Pagans, we find the religious devotees called Fakeers, clothing themselves in filthy rags, and living as mendicants. And we find the Mahometan Fast of Ramadan kept for a whole month with such rigour, that from sunrise to sunset they abstain not only from all food, but even from water, in a climate of parching heat.

And very early in the christian world we find men renowned for their holiness in proportion to their self-inflicted sufferings. We read of some who excited admiration by restricting themselves not only to bread, but to bread mixed with ashes, on purpose to render it distasteful: we find them clothing themselves with sackcloth purposely kept in a state of disgusting filth; standing day and night on the top of a pillar; lying on beds of flints, and taking precautions to have their natural rest, even there, interrupted; excluding the light of day, and imprisoning themselves in dungeons; besides scourgings and a great variety of other modes of self-torture, only to be exceeded by those of the Hindoo idolaters[1].

There can be no doubt then, I say, of the fact that there is a tendency in human nature to regard pain,—privation—in short "mortification" in the popular sense of the word, (which, as I shall hereafter have occasion to point out, is totally different from the Scripture-sense), especially when voluntary, and gratuitously self-inflicted, as acceptable to God. The notion evidently is not derived either from Christianity as such, or from Mahometanism, or from Paganism, or from any particular form of Paganism; since it is found in these various religions; but from some tendency in human nature itself.

It appears then that not only an active and eloquent religious teacher who should proclaim a religion of *self-indulgence* and worldliness, would be likely to gain converts, but also, any superstitious fanatic or crafty impostor who should

[1] See Note A, at the end of this Essay.

exhibit in himself, and recommend to others, excessive *austerity* and self-torture, would be likely to excite admiration of his supposed holiness, and faith in his pretensions.

And accordingly, since these two,—seemingly most opposite —systems, that of complete self-indulgence, and that of ascetic self-mortification, have, each something to recommend it to the human mind, one might expect that any one teaching a religion either invented or modified by Man, would adopt one or the other of these two courses.

False teachers *disposed to* combine *ascetic mortifications with general licentiousness: the teaching of Jesus keeping clear of both.*

§ 5 In fact, we find that *in most cases the two are combined.* Certain *persons*, or certain *seasons*, we find *set aside* as it were, for the practice of austerities; and a kind of *compensation* is made by allowing the utmost laxity of morals in other persons, or at other times. Thus the rigid fast of Mahometans (above alluded to) during one month, is a sort of compensation for general sensuality; and the austerities habitually practised (or supposed to be practised) by their Fakeers, obtain for them the high veneration of the multitude, but are not at all regarded as an *example* for the multitude to follow[1]. The supposed eminent holiness of these, and of other similar ascetics in other religions, induces the generality of the people not, to emulate their practice, but to seek their prayers and blessing. And by none are such ascetics usually more venerated than by those whose own lives are spent in unbridled licentiousness. Such a system of religion consequently is calculated to suit persons of the most various, and even opposite dispositions. And it will generally be found that the prevalence in any religion of general laxity of morals, and of severe austerities, will nearly keep pace with each other. The greater the merit attached to the self-inflicted sufferings of certain devotees, the greater will be the indulgence for a pre-

[1] See Essay on *Vicarious Religion*. (Third Series.)

vailing, habitual disregard of the general rules of morality. And again, the stricter the requisition of severe Fasts and other mortifications, at certain seasons, according to certain prescribed regulations, the less is the general self-restraint at other times.

Those ancient Heathen above-mentioned, who lacerated their flesh, and burned their children, in honour of their gods, were not only most licentious in their lives, but had special *religious festivals*, which were regularly celebrated by intemperance and profligacy. And the modern Hindoos, according to the best accounts, seem to be as remarkable for the absence of moral restraint from their religion, as for the excessive extravagance and variety of its mortifications;—the self-inflicted penances above alluded to. The same gods whom they believe to be propitiated by severe fasts and mangling of the flesh, and self-sacrifice—these same imaginary gods not only are not represented as requiring of their votaries habitual temperance, and purity, and honesty, and veracity, but are even, some of them, the acknowledged patrons of robbers and murderers by profession: and the very worship of many of them is celebrated in festivals of the grossest licentiousness[1].

And the further any one extends his inquiries into the history of all nations, ancient and modern, the more reason he will see to be convinced that any religion either wholly of Man's devising, or mixed, and modified, and corrupted with human inventions, is likely to be characterised by those features I have described: it will generally be found to place religious excellence more in self-inflicted sufferings than in moral duty;—to prize more that *mortification* which consists in gratuitous endurance of pain and privation, without any further object, than that "mortification" which our Scriptures speak of,—the habitual repression of evil passions.

The word "mortify," originally signifies—as well as the two Greek words of which it is a translation—to "put to

[1] See Ward, on the *Religion of the Hindoos*.

death." And it is invariably used by the Sacred Writers (doubtless in allusion to the *death* of Christ for his People, whom He came to "save from their sins") in the sense of suppressing and subduing sinful propensities, and bringing the body into subjection to the Spirit. Never once do they employ it in reference simply to pain or privation, as such. In our ordinary language, on the contrary, the word is commonly applied to any kind of suffering, simply *as suffering;* in which sense either scanty or unpleasant food, or lying on a bed of stones, scourging, wearing of hair-cloth, or any other infliction of pain, would be called "mortification."

It would be vain to attempt changing the established language of any country; but much confusion of thought and error are likely to arise from our taking a word in its popular sense in passages of Scripture in which it has invariably a different sense. For instance, the Apostle Paul tells us (Col. iii. 5), "*Mortify* (νεκρώσατε) your members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness," &c. And again, "If ye live after the flesh," (*i.e.* a life of sensuality,) "ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do *mortify* (θανατοῦτε) the deeds of the body, ye shall live." And in the same spirit he says (Rom. vi. 6), "Knowing this, that our Old Man is *crucified* with Christ, that the body of *sin* might be *destroyed*," &c.; and again (Gal. v. 24), "They that are Christ's have *crucified* the flesh, with the affections and lusts."

Now if from Scripture, whose sense seems in this point so very plain, men infer that "mortification" is well-pleasing in God's sight, and then understand "mortification" in the popular sense, as the simple infliction of suffering and privation of every kind, this surely must be from the prevalence of that tendency above alluded to,—the tendency to seek divine favour by self-torture as something in itself acceptable to the Deity[1].

We have seen then what was our Lord's teaching, and

[1] See Note A, at the end of this Essay.

again what would have been likely to be the teaching of a superstitious enthusiast, or of a designing impostor. Any one *not* sent from God would have been likely to accommodate himself to the dispositions of man; either by allowing to his zealous disciples a *relaxation of moral obligations*, or by recommending *self-inflicted sufferings* as a laudable service of God, or, most likely, by *both together*. Jesus, on the contrary, does *neither*. He allows of no *exemptions* from moral duty,—no shrinking from dangers and sufferings to be encountered *in his cause*,—no refusal to bear the cross that may be *allotted* to each; and yet never enjoins or encourages any self-inflicted pain, or needless exposure to danger. His religion therefore, as taught by Himself, differs in a most important point from any that ever was devised, either wholly or in part, by men. And this is one of the proofs open to any man of plain common sense, which may furnish an answer to the question, "Was it from Heaven, or of men?"

Practice of the Apostles *conformable to the lessons they had received from their Master.*

§ 6 Further proofs, if further can be needed, that the genuine Gospel is distinguished from all human devices by that peculiarity which has been here pointed out,—yet further proof of this, I say, may be furnished by the conduct of Christ's immediate followers. We find them cheerfully undergoing toils and sufferings of various kinds *in the propagation of the Gospel*;—submitting to imprisonment,—glorying in stripes,—braving various dangers,—"ready, not to be bound only, but also to die, for the name of the Lord Jesus,"—so harassed and persecuted that Paul says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." And yet we not only find no mention of any self-inflicted sufferings or privations, but we even find them always taking care to preserve themselves from persecutions and all other outward afflictions, whenever this could be done without any detriment to the great cause they were engaged in;—without denying their Master, or shrinking from his service.

Twice we find Paul pleading his rights as a Roman Citizen, which entitled him to an exemption from bonds and stripes when uncondemned: at Philippi, where he boldly rebuked the magistrates for their illegal infliction of these indignities, and at Jerusalem, where the Chief-Captain Lysias was alarmed into forbearance. How is this to be reconciled with "rejoicing to be thought worthy to suffer the shame of stripes for the name of the Lord Jesus?" Evidently, only in this way: that the "cross" which each disciple was required to bear, was to be *his* cross;—that the endurance of suffering was *then* only a christian virtue when it was not self-imposed; when it was not *avoidable, except* by the abandonment of the christian cause. The persecutions they were to rejoice in must not be *courted* persecutions, but only such as were, to faithful Christians, inevitable.

And it was the same not with persecution only, but with every kind of danger and affliction from whatever cause. In the narrative of Paul's voyage to Rome, we find him taking every precaution against the impending dangers, that could have been expected in the most timorous lover of life. Paul, who declares that to him to "die was gain," and that he had "a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better," —this very man remonstrated with the Centurion against putting to sea at a dangerous season. And afterwards, when the ship strikes, although *it had been revealed to him* that no lives would be lost, yet understands (which is a very remarkable circumstance) that this implied the use of all ordinary human means to ensure safety, and that he was bound not to neglect the use of these means. He takes measures to prevent the desertion of the mariners, without whom, he tells the Centurion, "*ye cannot be saved.*"

In short, throughout the whole of the sacred narrative, we find the Apostles acting fully up to the spirit of their Lord's instructions; ready to "pluck out the eye," or "cut off the hand," *if* it "offend;" but not otherwise; ready, each to

"bear his cross,"—*his own* cross;—the burden of affliction which Providence might see fit should be laid on him; but no other. We find them, in their christian warfare, acting the part of good and faithful soldiers; whose duty is to endure cheerfully hardship and toil,—to brave wounds and death,—when *summoned* to do so in the course of their service;—to shrink from nothing that they are *commanded* to do or to bear; —but never to expose themselves wantonly to danger, when *not* commanded;—nor to inflict on themselves, merely in ostentation of their fortitude, any sufferings or privations that have no other object.

Such was the Apostles' interpretation of their Lord's teaching; and such was the example they left us of obedience to Him.

Introduction into christian Churches *of ascetic self-torture, in opposition to the precepts and practice of Jesus and his Apostles, a proof of their divine mission*

§ 7. How soon, and how much, Christians of later ages perverted that teaching, and departed from that example, is well known. Early introduced, and widely spread, and hard to be eradicated, and easily revived, is the notion of a man's becoming, by a presumptuous "will-worship"—by performance of supposed services that have not been enjoined—a sort of saviour to himself; or of atoning, himself, for his own, and even for his neighbours' sins. And the introduction of such notions and practices into the religion of the Gospel, *contrary* to its original and proper character, shows, more plainly even than the instances of the Pagan religions, how suitable to the "natural man" is the kind "of will-worship;" and consequently how sure we should have been to find it in the teaching of Jesus, and in the precepts and practice of the Apostles, if these men had not been indeed from God.

Soon did men arise in the christian Churches, "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them," distorting and misapplying the Apostolic precepts and practice which

they professed to follow, and pretending to imitate the Apostles by inflicting on themselves such pains and privations as those Apostles endured patiently when occurring in their path of christian duty.

The true way to imitate the Apostles is by enduring, like them, not whatever may appear to us to afford the most admirable display of fortitude, but, whatever trials are *appointed* to each man;—not, by going *out* of our way to create trials for ourselves; but by steadily walking *in* the way which God's Providence has marked out for each of us. Christian Self-denial consists not in volunteering self-torture, but in "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and in living" (not at this or that particular season, but always) "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present life."

If the amount of pain endured, and the degree of resistance to inclination,—if Self-denial in *this* sense—were to be the measure of christian excellence,—then, the Christian would, in proportion as he advanced, be continually becoming *less* and less acceptable in God's sight. For there can be no doubt that the restraint of bad propensities, and the practice of temperance, beneficence, gentleness, and every christian virtue, become continually *easier* as the christian character improves. Those therefore who adopt such a standard as that just mentioned,—who make Self-denial, in the sense of *painful* mortification, the measure of their christian proficiency—must resort to *self-torture*, and go on continually devising fresh modes of making their service of God as irksome as possible!

And yet, strange as it appears, many are more readily induced to adopt *this* course, than that which the Gospel really points out to us. Habitual self-control, and readiness and firmness in the performance of each *appointed* duty, whether agreeable or painful, is a kind of self-denial which is, as experience shows, more difficult to "the natural man," than occasional—or even habitual—austerities, and self-imposed hardships and pains.

But for this, more difficult, task—for the practice of truly christian Self-denial—we have the promised aid of the Holy Spirit which "helpeth our infirmities;" and through that help, the subjugation of evil passions—the "mortifying of the deeds of the flesh"—however painful at first, will continually become easier, in proportion as the christian moral-character improves. Obedience to Christ's commands will continually become, to those "who are led by his Spirit," less and less of *self-denial*, because each man's *self*—his very nature and character—will become more and more conformed to the image of Christ; and his faithful followers will more and more find, from their own happy experience, that his "yoke is easy, and his burden light."

Indistinct and confused notions respecting Fasting, *arising from inattention to the* senses *of the word, and to the* grounds, *and the* objects *of the practice.*

§ 8 A considerable part, however, of the difficulties which occur to some minds in reference to the present subject, arise from the frequent mention in Scripture of "Fasting;" which having been in after times often enjoined, recommended, or practised, as a part of "self-denial" or "mortification," (in the popular sense of those words,) and some having hastily taken for granted that it is prescribed, or commended in Scripture, with *that* view—*i. e.* on the ground that self-inflicted suffering or privation is, as such, an acceptable service—the inference has been drawn, that the character of our Religion must be, in that point at least, opposite to what has been just above described.

Others, again, have supposed that Fasting—as distinguished from scourging, wearing of sackcloth, and all other self-inflicted hardships—is a Positive Ordinance of the Gospel; or again, that it is a moral duty, or at least a christian virtue, and one which we should endeavour, in some way or other, to practise.

And many, I believe, have a sort of vague, undefined, general impression left on the mind, composed of all these

different notions confusedly blended together; which leads to a perplexing and painful state of doubt on the subject. Nothing indeed but confusion of thought, and distressing uncertainty as to conduct, can be the result of an attempt to follow the guidance of Scripture without taking the pains to examine and carefully reflect on what we read. And yet there are persons who, in reference to the present subject, have never even thought of inquiring as to several points which must present themselves to any one who is seeking to obtain distinct notions concerning it.

What is meant by the word "fasting" in Scripture, and whether it is always the *same* thing that is meant in every place where the word occurs,—with *what view* it was in each case practised by those whom we read of as fasting,—whether simply as a self-inflicted *suffering*, or as a *penance*, or as a *discipline* resorted to for the repression of any sinful propensity, or again, merely as an outward sign of mourning,—whether any kind of Fast is *enjoined* in Scripture, so as to bind Christians in all ages,—and again, if it *be* a duty, in what manner it is to be performed; and whether it is to be regarded as a natural moral-duty, like that of integrity or beneficence, or of a positive ordinance, like the Jewish Passover or the christian Eucharist,—all these are questions naturally occurring to the mind of one who is not satisfied with notions utterly vague and confused; and which yet some persons have not inquired into at all. Nay, one may even meet with persons who have hardly ever thought of considering attentively the difference, generally, between what are called *positive* precepts and *moral* precepts;—between things which are right because they are commanded, and those which are commanded because they are right.

There are many who would probably state this distinction correctly if the question were put to them in the abstract, who yet are perpetually losing sight of it in practice, especially in what relates to the following of apostolic *example*,—copying apostolic *precedents*, &c. On the one hand, natural [moral] duties, being such independently of express command, the

precepts relative to these are to be regarded rather as a "*stirring up* of a pure mind by way of *remembrance*" (2 Pet. iii.), than as the enactment of a new rule; and the examples set before us are rather an illustration of a principle, and an incitement to emulation, than patterns to be minutely copied. None but a disingenuous caviller would require to be told precisely what portion of his income he should give in charity,—on what occasions, and in what mode, he should practise integrity, or temperance,—and whether these duties were to be such permanently, or only for a temporary emergency. On the other hand, in respect of things originally and *intrinsically* indifferent —such as rites and ceremonies, and ecclesiastical regulations of all kinds — we may expect clear commands and precise directions as to anything that we are to be bound to do; and any recorded practice of the Apostles must be (if so intended) distinctly *declared* to be a *precedent* which all future ages are strictly bound to conform to. For instance, the command is distinct, to commemorate the Sacrifice of Christ,—to "show forth the Lord's death *till He come*,"—by partaking of bread and wine: but the use of leavened or of unleavened bread, (which latter we know must have been used at the institution of the Rite,) and the retaining or discontinuing of the Love-feasts [Agapæ], which we know used in early times to succeed the Eucharist; and, again, the posture of the communicants, and the form of administration—these points, since no distinct directions as to them are given, seem left to the discretion of each Church; and are considered (which is worthy of remark) as thus left at large, even by those who pretend to hold that every apostolic usage is absolutely binding on all Christians for ever. And it is the same with other similar cases. In such points, to follow "apostolic example" is to "let all things be done to edifying."

The two opposite errors,—that of expecting, in respect of points of natural morality, to find in Scripture distinct commands, and detailed directions as to every case that can arise,—and that of regarding, in respect of things intrinsically indif-

ferent, every recorded, or even suspected, apostolic usage, as a precedent and model from which no Christians must venture ever to depart, though there be no injunction in Scripture to that effect, (which principle however none of those who maintain it have ever fully followed out with honest consistency)—these two opposite errors, each, imply a confounding together of "natural" and "positive" obligation.

And indeed attentive reflection, altogether, and patient and careful study of what Scripture teaches—any thing answering to that diligent attention with which any one applies himself to any history, art, or science, which he is anxious to learn,—all this,—as I have observed above,—is what too many men seem to regard as needless, or even as improper, in respect of religious concerns: as if we were to be instructed in christian faith and practice by simply opening the Bible at hazard, and taking any passage that happens to meet the eye, and attaching to it any meaning that happens to occur to the mind.

The varieties of practice which have arisen in various Countries and Ages in respect of the present subject, are such as might have been expected from the various and often vague and ill-defined notions that have existed in the minds of different persons. Some have considered that fasting is to be practised by Christians as a kind of imitation of the Fast of their Master in the Wilderness at the time of his Temptation. And indeed in the greater part of Christendom the commemoration of that event has long been made, partly, by some kind of Fast established as a Church-ordinance: though it can be but a symbolical and figurative reference that any such Fast can have to the event commemorated. It evidently cannot be a direct *imitation* of Christ's *example;* since *his* abstinence, supposing it to have been, as it appears, from food altogether, must have been perfectly miraculous: and since we are also expressly told that it was not till the *end* of the forty days that He was assailed by the temptation of hunger.

Again, some have regarded fasting as dependent on the

quality, others, on the *quantity*, of the food taken; and others on both: while some again have considered it as consisting in total abstinence from all food. The Mahometans, whose religion is based on the Jewish and the christian (such as Mahomet found them) take this last view; and during the fast-month of Ramadan (above alluded to) regard the swallowing of even a drop of water between sunrise and sunset as a violation of the Fast. Of the same character also are reported to be the Fasts of the Abyssinian Christians: while others, again, lay no restriction even on the use of strong liquors; and make every thing depend on the distinction between different kinds of meats.

And there prevails a still greater degree (if possible) of variety of opinion, uncertainty, and confusion of thought, as to the *grounds* of the practice;—whether it is to rest on the authority of Scripture, or of a Church;—as to the *character* of it;—whether it is to be regarded as a *moral* or as a *positive* duty;—and again, as to the *object* of it;—whether it is to be observed as a mode of self-inflicted *pain*, (like the flint-bed or the scourge,) and as being on that ground acceptable to God, or again, as a mode of bringing the body into subjection to the Spirit, in the way of weakening evil passions and fortifying the intellectual and moral portions of the mind. And the employment (as was observed above) of the word "mortification" in different senses—to denote sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, of these two things,—contributes to increase the vagueness and perplexity I have been alluding to. That word is commonly applied, as has been already remarked, in ordinary language,—not (in the Scriptural sense) to the subjugation of sin,—but to any kind of *suffering*, simply as suffering. And in this sense it has no special reference to *Fasting* more than to any *other* kind of painful privation. Abstinence from food, or confinement to scanty or to unpleasant food, or privation of sleep, or walking barefoot on rugged stones, or kneeling in a painful posture, or wearing of hair-

cloth, or of disgustingly filthy garments, or any other infliction of pain, would equally be called a "mortification[1]."

To attempt to discuss fully all the several questions that pertain to this subject would be to enter on too wide a field of inquiry. But something will have been gained, if we can but clear up the sense of some of those passages of Scripture which have been indistinctly or erroneously understood, and which have consequently occasioned difficulty and distressing doubt, and erroneous practice.

The word "fast" often used to denote, simply, want of food, without reference to voluntary *abstinence.*

§ 9 First then, we should mark and set aside all those passages (and there are several) in which "fasting" is spoken of in the sense, simply, of absence of food, or of sufficient food, or of regular meals; without any reference to a *voluntary* act, or any connection with *religion.*

Such is, for instance, the passage (Acts xxvii.) where, in the course of the narrative of the storm which Paul and his companions encountered on the voyage to Rome, it is mentioned that they had "fasted fourteen days, having taken nothing:" by which of course we must understand merely that they had taken no regular meals in all that time, but, in the midst of the unceasing terror, and exertion, and confusion, occasioned by the tempest, had only occasionally snatched a morsel of food sufficient to sustain life.

This kind of distress,—besides many others,—Paul was frequently exposed to in his many sea-voyages and land-journeys, on occasions not recorded in the book of Acts; as we learn from his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (xi. 27,) where he speaks of himself as having been "in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness," &c.

That the "fastings" of which he is here speaking, are of the description just mentioned, and not any kind of religious

[1] See Note, at the end of this Essay.

exercise, is plain from the context; as he is manifestly enumerating, not his devotional practices, but his hardships and trials. His "fastings" accordingly—amounting occasionally not merely to pain from hunger and thirst, but to distressing famine,—are mentioned, not along with prayers and meditations, but with "perils" and "stripes" and "stoning." And it is observable also that the "watchings" which he likewise mentions in the same place, have no reference to any sort of *voluntary* exercise. In our version indeed, the word corresponds with that in our Lord's exhortation to "*watch* and pray;" but in the Original, quite different words are employed. In the exhortation, to "watch" (γρηγορεῖν) is to be *vigilant* like a sentinel; in Paul's description of his sufferings, "watching" (ἀγρυπνία) means "privation of sleep,"—"want of repose." And the same words are employed, in the same manner, when he speaks, in another place, of being "in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in *watchings*, in *fastings*."

Fasting an ordinary sign and accompaniment, according to Jewish usage, of Mourning *and of* Prayer.

On many occasions again, Fasting,—in the other, and now more popular sense,—*i. e.* voluntary abstinence—is mentioned both in the Old and New Testaments; sometimes as a customary and established sign of *mourning*,—along with wearing of sackcloth, and sprinkling of ashes on the head,—and sometimes again as an ordinary accompaniment of especially solemn *prayer*, according to ancient Eastern custom.

Besides many other parts of the Old Testament, we may perceive from the narrative of David's fasting and weeping for his child when it was sick, and of the surprise of his servants at his not fasting after it was dead, how well-known and customary a sign it was both of mourning and of earnest devotion. And the only Fast appointed by the Law of Moses,—that on the great day of Atonement (Levit. xxiii. 26)—in which, by the way, the word "fast" does not itself occur, nor any special reference to abstinence from food—the Israelites

are directed to "afflict their souls," *i.e.* to keep a day of solemn "*mourning*."

Then, again, it was also (as I have said) a customary accompaniment of *prayer*, among the Jews, and those who adopted their usages; as we may collect from several incidental notices. For instance, the Prophetess Anna is mentioned as one who served God habitually in the Temple with "fasting and prayer;" and Cornelius the Centurion, as "fasting and praying" in his house when the Angel appeared to him. And several other such cases are incidentally recorded.

Of course, we cannot suppose that Fasting was an accompaniment of *every* prayer,—else there would have been no need ever to mention it at all;—but only, we may suppose, on those more solemn occasions when a certain time was set apart for a *course* of prayer. And such, I conceive, must have been the "prayer and fasting" alluded to by our Lord in reference to the Demoniac whom the Disciples had failed to relieve. *They* had not, we know, unlimited power (as their Master had) of working miracles. It was *given* them on certain occasions: and the giving of it, was, in some way or other, *intimated* to them; as, on Peter, for instance, the power of walking on the sea, was conferred by his Lord's command. And we find them sometimes *praying* for the power to perform a certain miracle; as, we may collect, was done by Peter before he raised up Tabitha from death. (Acts ix.) In the case of that Demoniac, it should seem that our Lord tells the disciples they should not have attempted to perform the cure without having first received some clear intimation of their commission to perform it, such as should remove all *doubt* from their minds, (whence he tells them that they failed from *want of faith;* that is, they proceeded while in a state of uncertainty) and that in order to obtain such assurance they should have first resorted to a course of special, persevering supplication for the miraculous power;—to that, in short, which they would understand Him to mean by "prayer and fasting."

We find also prayer and fasting mentioned in the Book of

Acts on the occasion of the *ordaining* of Ministers; an occasion on which a solemn *course of prayer* (such as, according to Jewish usage, was accompanied by fasting) was to be looked for.

Strong injunctions to Prayer *by our Lord, in the New Testament, quite different from his mention of Fasting.*

§ 10 What the kind of abstinence was that the Jews were accustomed to use on such occasions, we are nowhere told in Scripture.

It is remarkable that though neither Prayer nor Fasting occupy any considerable place in the Mosaic Law,—no prayer at all being enjoined, except in one passage (Deut. xxvi.) where the Israelite is directed, on the occasion of a festival occurring but once in three years, to implore God's blessing on his People—yet both Prayer and Fasting *were* practised by the Jews, of their own accord. It is also remarkable that notwithstanding they did habitually practise the duty of Prayer, yet our Lord deemed it needful to give very frequent and earnest *injunctions* to that effect; exhorting men to "pray always, and not to faint," and enforcing his precepts by several parables; lest, in after-ages, Prayer should fall into disuse[1]. For Fasting, on the other hand, neither He nor his Apostles give any injunction at all, as making it any part of christian duty.

But it was our Lord's general rule to leave untouched all the existing customs of his own Age and Country, except where they were sinful; where the Pharisees had "made the Word of God of none effect through their Tradition."

He censures also the ostentatious *manner* in which both Prayer and Fasting were practised by the Pharisees; exhorting men to make no public display of those devotions which were of a private character. *Public Worship* in the *Temple* and in the Synagogues, it is plain He never meant to forbid; but it is for offering up their prayers in the *streets* and in the

[1] See Lectures on the *Parables*, L. X.

market-place that He censures the hypocrites. Those Prayers and Fasts of these men, which were thus ostentatiously displayed, evidently did not profess to be any part of the established public-worship. And when He was asked, reproachfully, why his disciples did not, like those of the Pharisees and of John, practise Fasting, there is no imputation cast on Him for a violation of the *Law*, or neglect of any *public Ordinance*; but merely wonder and blame are expressed that while He professed to be a religious teacher, his disciples should exhibit, apparently, a less religious mode of life, in one respect, than the followers of John and of the Pharisees.

His answer to this inquiry has reference to what I have above remarked, of Fasting being understood as an accompaniment and sign of mourning: (Matt. ix. 15) "Can the children of the bride-chamber *mourn*" (in Mark ii. 19 the word is "*fast*") "as long as the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them; and then will they fast." A wedding was, we know, a scene of especial festivity among the Jews; with which anything savouring of mourning, among the Bridegroom's companions, [the "children of the bride-chamber"] would have been inconsistent; but when the Bridegroom (by which it is plain He means Himself) shall be taken from them, "then," says He, "they will fast in those days."

From this passage it is plain, among other things, that neither our Lord, nor the questioners, had any thought of *self-discipline* as a legitimate purpose of "fasting" (a notion which arose several ages after); for in *that* point of view, the disciples would have needed it while their Lord was with them as well as afterwards; so that his reply would have been nothing to the purpose.

It is to be further remarked respecting this passage, that it contains no *precept* as to what his disciples were *enjoined* to do; only a *prophecy* of what *would* take place. It is, however, important to determine aright what it was that the prophecy related to;—what period is denoted by "those days;" since it

was a period during which *mourning* is spoken of,—not indeed as a thing *commanded*, but as natural and *suitable* for Christ's disciples.

What were the "days of mourning" by the Disciples for the "Bridegroom's being taken from them."

§ 11 Now some have understood by "those days" all ages of the christian Church subsequent to the departure of Jesus in bodily person from the Earth: comprehending therefore in those days of mourning, the present, and all future time, till his triumphant return to judge the world at the last day. But this is surely to overlook, or greatly to misunderstand, his own words. For in some of his later discourses to the disciples, recorded by John, He dwells very fully and strongly on the sorrow they will feel at the loss of their Master, which sorrow was to be succeeded by *joy*,—*lasting* joy—at his return. "Because I have said, I go my way to Him that sent me .... sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is *expedient* for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him," &c. .... "Ye will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice, and ye will be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into *joy*; .... and ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will *see you again*, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy *no man taketh* from you." (John xvi. 6 and 20.)

Now the disciples, it is true, had to spend their lives, for the most part, in trials, dangers, indignities, persecutions, and various kinds of hardship. And some have imagined that the period of "mourning" Jesus alludes to,—"then shall they fast in those days" denotes this life of suffering which awaited them after his departure in the body. But I greatly wonder that any one should so utterly overlook what is said both by Himself and his Apostles. It would indeed be very natural for an ordinary man to regard as a period of *mourning* that life of privation and hardship to which the first preachers of the Gospel were subjected; but far different, and indeed contrary,

was the view which *they* themselves and their great Master took of it. The "*mourning*" He alludes to was not on account of bodily afflictions, but on account of the loss of *Him*, their Lord: which sorrow was to be completely and finally removed; their "joy no man was *to take from them.*" But as for worldly troubles and hardships, these were a kind of trial which *He* prepared them *not* to mourn for, but to endure joyfully. "Peace," says He (John xiv.) "I leave with you: *my* peace[1] I give unto you: not as the World giveth, give I unto you. . . . . In the World ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the World." And again, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and shall separate you from their company, and reproach you; . . . . when they shall persecute you for righteousness' sake: . . . . *rejoice* in that day, and leap for joy," &c.

And well did the Apostles learn and practise, and inculcate on their converts, the lesson He had taught them. "My brethren," says the Apostle James, "count it all *joy* when ye fall into divers temptations;" *i.e.* trials by persecution. "They departed rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame[2]," &c. "I am filled," says Paul[3], "with comfort; I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation," &c. To the World they might appear "of all men most miserable;" but they themselves felt quite otherwise; they were "as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing."

From these and many other passages, but much more still, from the general tone of the New Testament writers, we may plainly see that the days of "mourning" which our Lord alludes to, cannot have been the life of hardship which awaited the preachers of the Gospel, nor could have had any reference to such outward afflictions. That time of mourning for their Lord's absence, was evidently, first, the interval of desponding sorrow between his crucifixion and his appearance after the Resurrection[4]: and, secondly, in a less degree, that

[1] εἰρηνὴν τὴν ἐμὴν.

[2] Acts v. 41. [3] 2 Cor. vii. 4. [4] See Luke xxiv. 17.

interval of comparative loneliness, though cheered by hope,—that twilight following the darkness of despondency, and preceding the restoration of a full sunshine—the interval between the Ascension and the Day of Pentecost: when their Master was restored to them, not in body, but in Spirit, as the "Comforter who should abide with them for ever[1]."

If indeed it had been a *new* Master,—a *different* Being—that they were then and thenceforth to be under, though sent by their former Master, their joy would not have been "full:" they would still have mourned the departure of Him in whose service they had originally enlisted. Any one who has a heart for friendship,—who knows what real personal attachment is—knows well that its object is, not certain *qualities* merely, but a *certain individual person*. "Substitute,"—"successor,"—"equal,"—"similar,"—"equally good,"—are words unknown in his vocabulary. The cravings of an affectionate heart can only be satisfied with the *very person* on whom it is fixed. The dejection of the Disciples therefore in the absence of their original Master would never have been wholly removed by any gifts conferred under the dominion of a different Being.

But this—though the language of some writers would lead one to take such a view—is very far from being that view which Jesus taught his Disciples to take, and which they did take, of their condition. On the contrary, He seems to have sedulously guarded them against any such thought. "I will not," says He, "leave you comfortless; *I* will come unto you." .... "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice:" and that this cannot refer to the interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension is plain from his adding, "Your joy *no man taketh from you.*" And again, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and *We* will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

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[1] The title of Paraclete, rendered in the *Gospel* of John "Comforter," is applied to Jesus in the first *Epistle*, in which our Version renders it "Advocate."

And in like manner Paul, in speaking of the graces of the Holy Spirit, says, "If any man have not the Spirit of *Christ*, he is none of his:" . . . . "The Lord" (*Jesus*) is the [that] Spirit; [TO Πνεῦμα.]

It is plain therefore that no mourning—no Fast in that sense—was designed to be the habitual condition—the general standing rule—of the christian Church.

Fasting one of the things left *by the Apostles to the decision of christian Churches, and of individuals.*

§ 12 As for Fasting of any other description,—whether as an outward sign of mourning on extraordinary occasions, or as an accompaniment of prayer, the Sacred Writers have left the whole matter to the discretion of Christians, whether as private individuals or as Churches. In the course of their narratives they have *recorded*, incidentally, the existing practices; but have nowhere given any *injunctions* or directions on the subject. While earnestly inculcating the habitual use of Prayer, both public and private, they have left each *Church* in respect of *public* congregational prayers, and each *individual* Christian in respect of his *private* devotions, to regulate the particular modes of fulfilling that duty, as may to each seem best: so that "all things" (says the Apostle) "be done to edifying."

A further admonition however is given by the same Apostle (Rom. xiv. 2), not to judge harshly, or, again, to speak contemptuously, of one another in respect of these matters. "One man believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." And again, he tells us that meat doth not recommend us to God, for that we are not the better or the worse for eating or for not eating; but that "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God."

It is probable the Apostle had here in view, principally at

least, the scrupulous dread of some weak brethren of eating something that had been strangled, or that had been offered to idols. The principle, however, which he is inculcating is of very general application: namely, that with respect to matters intrinsically indifferent, and on which no positive command has been given, each is to act according to the best of his own judgment, and not presume to condemn or to despise others for not coinciding with him.

In respect of these points then, as well as many others[1], the inspired Writers have left, as I have said, the determination to the responsible discretion of each Church, or of each individual Christian. And each Church has a right—in respect of such things as are neither distinctly *enjoined* by Scripture or by natural conscience, nor again *at variance* with either of these,—to enact, or abrogate, or alter from time to time, any public Ordinances, according as to each may appear most conducive to edification.

To teach however as a duty, or as a christian virtue, self-denial, not in the Gospel-sense of the word, but in the sense of pain or privation voluntarily undergone, as a thing, in itself, and as such, acceptable to God,—this would be to exceed the legitimate powers of a Church; because it is, as we have seen, *at variance* with the whole spirit of the Gospel-religion. This, and sundry other DEVELOPMENTS (as the modern phrase is) of the Gospel-scheme—that is, in plain terms, human additions to a divine Revelation—were introduced in early Ages of the Church, and have always found admission, more or less, in a great part of the christian World. But our Reformers, whatever opinion may be formed as to what their decisions were, or ought to have been, as to some points[2], must at least be acknowledged to have kept perfectly free from the above-mentioned error: that of representing gratuitous, self-imposed suffering,—whether from hunger and thirst, or cold, or scourg-

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[1] See Essay II., on the *Kingdom of Christ*, § 13.

[2] See Note B, at the end of this Essay.

ings, or beds of flint, or of whatever kind,—as an acceptable christian Service. Neither as an atonement for sin, nor as, in any way, a christian duty, do they recommend or countenance any kind of voluntary self-inflicted *pain*, simply as pain, and as on that ground approved by our heavenly Master; or as either something to be *superadded* to, or *substituted* for, the duty of habitual temperance and self-control.

Danger of Asceticism, less palpable, *but not less real, than that of sensual indulgences.*

§ 13 The danger however is not only so great, but likewise so palpable, of giving way to intemperance or to luxurious self-indulgence, that many are apt to disbelieve or overlook all danger on the side of Asceticism, and to consider *that* as being, at the worst, no more than a harmless error, leading to no evil beyond the unnecessary bodily suffering undergone;—as something superfluous, but nowise mischievous. But in truth *nothing is harmless that is mistaken for a virtue.* Whatever is practised and admired as a christian duty, when it is none, is likely to be worse than useless: and to dwell ever so copiously, and eloquently, and truly, on *one* class of faults, does not go a step towards disproving the reality, or the magnitude, or the danger, of a different class of faults.

In the present instance, besides the danger above adverted to, of combining *both* faults,—of compensating, by austerities at particular seasons, for habitual self-indulgence at other times,—there are also other evils connected with Asceticism. Experience will show to any one who carefully and candidly surveys mankind, that it has a strong tendency to generate spiritual pride, uncharitable harshness towards opponents, and a general laxity of conscience in points not immediately connected with ascetic observances. Let any one look to the latter part of the third century, and the period immediately succeeding, and to every Age and portion of the Church in which ascetic mortification has most flourished; and he will find the general rule to be (subject, of course, like other general rules, to exceptions), that those most remarkable for excessive

austerities, have been remarkable also for overbearing pride, veiled from themselves and from others by a seeming humility; —a pride fostered by the almost idolatrous veneration—far beyond what real christian virtues generally obtain—that is bestowed by those around them. They will be found also, generally speaking, to have been distinguished by a morose and irritable temper; impatient of opposition, bitter and rancorous in controversy, merciless persecutors, and often most unscrupulous in the use of pious frauds and disingenuous artifice[1] in compassing their ends.

The truth seems to be, that while the practice of any truly christian virtue tends to cherish every other christian virtue, purifying and elevating the moral taste, and christianizing the whole character, the practice, on the contrary, of any spurious imitation of virtue is more likely to be *substituted* for general christian morality, than to prove a help towards it; and thus, gradually to debase, instead of exalting the character. Each point wherein we are truly copying the examples of Jesus and his Apostles, is an advance towards a resemblance to them, in principle and conduct, throughout; because the genuine "fruits of the Spirit" all come from the same root; and we are thus in the way to "add to our faith virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity[2]."

Every superstition, on the contrary—everything that is, either in practice or in principle, at variance with the character of those our great patterns,—tends, as far as it goes, to lead us away from them, and to divert religious sentiments into a wrong channel.

What kind of mortification is inculcated by our Reformers.

§ 14 Into superstition, of whatever kind, and, among others, that branch of it which consists in ascetic self-torture,—no one of candid mind is likely to be led by our Reformers[3]: who

[1] See Dr. West's Discourse on *Reserve*.

[2] 2 Pet. i. 5.

[3] Accordingly, we find—and it is a remarkable fact—that the advocates of

give, as I have before observed, no countenance to the notion of substituting for Gospel-morality, or superadding to it, periodical austerities, and endurance of gratuitous sufferings.

In the Collect, for example, for the 1st Sunday in Lent, the virtue which they instruct us to pray that we may be enabled to practise, is, "to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may *ever* obey God's motions in righteousness and true holiness;" which must evidently be a duty, not for a certain portion of each year, or week, but for every time alike. The fasting and self-denial which they direct us to practise[1], in the sense of resistance to *all* temptations and patient endurance of *every* cross that may be laid on us, and constant self-control, and subjugation of the appetites, and abstinence from *every* kind of luxurious excess, is evidently not a duty to be reserved for particular days and seasons, but to be habitually practised, and wrought into the whole character. For he who is a Christian at all, must be one *constantly;* because he is, as such, a "living stone" of the Temple of God's Spirit. "Know ye not" (says the Apostle) "that your bodies are the Temple of the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in you? Now if any one" (he adds) "defile the Temple of God, him will God destroy."

Let the Christian live therefore—not on this day or on that, but every day—as becomes those who believe that they are a portion of the Sanctuary, and who are preparing for the coming of Him "who shall change our vile body, that it may become like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself," and who "having this hope in them," strive to "purify themselves, even as He is pure."

Asceticism among the (nominal) members of our Church, are accustomed, either openly, or by oblique insinuations, to disparage these men,—to deny the great Reform they effected—and to resort to the examples and precepts of what they call "the Primitive Church;" that is, those Ages most fruitful in DEVELOPMENTS;—in corruptions of the Gospel-religion, and unauthorized additions to it, devised by presumptuous men.

[1] See Note C, at the end of this Essay.

NOTES TO ESSAY X.

NOTE A, pp. 247, 250, 260.

THE following extract from the biographical panegyric of an ascetic nun, (lately published) will show, as well as a multitude of other such records which might be cited, how nearly the christian religion has been brought to a resemblance to that of the Hindoos, in the point of self-torture; and one may add, almost of *self-immolation*. For though it is pretended that ascetics are advised to limit their inflictions at a point that will not endanger health, the praises bestowed on those who have not only endangered but manifestly shortened their lives, — praises bestowed expressly on that very account—plainly show that no such limitation is really prescribed.

"Each year she made a spiritual retreat of eight days, great part of which she spent in the Church on bended knees; and the night of Holy Thursday was ever, with her, one of sacred and unintermitting watching before the adorable sacrament of the altar; yet it was only in performing, after her death, the last rites of friendship to her remains, that *her bones were discovered to be excoriated and ulcerated*, and to have been so for years,—yet the *acute pain* which kneeling must have caused her, she bore with silent and enduring fortitude. She never whispered to her nearest and dearest associates a hint of her secret and long-continued suffering; it was known but to her and to God. The soles of her feet were, at the same time, found covered with tumours, such as would have prevented any other person from walking, yet for the last three years of her life she walked over great part of the city, begging from door to door for the support of those charitable institutions, which would otherwise have fallen to the ground.

"To such works was the life of Miss N——— devoted. In the year 1789, she reached the fifty-sixth year of her age. In the spring of that year, the symptoms of a *premature old age* began to develop themselves in her exhausted frame," &c. See also Dr. Gilly's *Vigilantius and his Times*, Chap. VI.

NOTE B, page 269.

Extract from an Act of Parliament, in the reign of Edward VI. A.D. 1549.

"THAT although Days and Meats are in themselves alike, yet Fasting being a great help to Virtue, and to the subduing the Body

to the Mind, *and a distinction of meats conducing to the advancement of the Fishing-trade*, be it enacted that Lent, and all Fridays and Saturdays and Ember Days, should be Fish Days." Penalties are annexed to the breaking of the Law, except in the case of weak persons and those who had *the King's licence.*

NOTE C, page 272.

WHAT is to be regarded as the decision of our own Church on this matter, is a question on which considerable doubt, perplexity and difference of opinion, have arisen. To enter on a full discussion of it would be foreign from the main design of this volume; which is, to elucidate the meaning, not, of any uninspired Formularies, but of some portions of *Scripture.*

It may be worth while, however, to remark that Fasting cannot be reckoned an "*Ordinance,*" properly so called, of our Church. There are indeed *allusions* to it in some of our Services; and also certain "Days of fasting and abstinence," and likewise "Feast-days," are noted in the Calendar: but no *injunctions* are anywhere given to observe these days, nor any directions as to the *mode* of observance, either of a Fast or a Feast. Now it would be an incorrect use of language almost amounting to a contradiction, to speak of an *Ordinance* which ordains nothing definite;—an injunction as to a positive duty, in which no one can say what it is that is enjoined.

When the Church directs what persons shall be Baptized,—shall be Confirmed,—shall receive the Holy Communion, no one can doubt what it is that he is required to do; the appointed Services being set forth along with rubrical directions, in the Prayer-book. And if there had been an express command given that all members of the Church should fast on certain days, we should have expected (as is manifestly necessary in the case of any positive ordinance) that the details should be no less distinctly specified. For "if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?"

And accordingly in those Churches which do retain Fasting among their public ordinances, all the particulars respecting the food to be used and abstained from, and respecting the dispensations that are to be allowed, are distinctly laid down, partly by each Church itself, and partly, within certain specified limits, by each Bishop, from year to year, within his own Diocese.

In our Church, on the contrary, not only are no such directions given, but those very Services just above alluded to seem to indicate that *no public positive ordinance* was designed; but only—as in the case of almsgiving—an *exhortation* to the practice of a *moral duty.*

For though the portion of Service appointed in place of the Epistle for Ash-Wednesday has a reference to a *public Fast* among the Jews, the Gospel, on the other hand, that is selected, contains our Lord's animadversion on the ostentatious practice of the Pharisees in their *private* Fasts; which He warns his Disciples against; "that thou *appear not unto men to fast:*" an admonition which would be wholly inapplicable to any *public* Ordinance. And again, when we look at the Collect for the 1st Sunday in Lent, we find it (as I have above remarked) referring altogether to the duty of *habitual temperance;* "such abstinence, that, the flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey God's motions in righteousness and true holiness," being evidently a moral duty, and one not pertaining to any particular season, but to all times.

And the very same duty, and no other, is inculcated throughout the Homily on Fasting. It refers indeed to passages of Scripture in which mention is made of Fasting, more properly so called; but the practical doctrine on which it dwells throughout, is, the duty of "keeping under the body and bringing it into subjection," by habitually refraining from any such indulgence of the appetites as may tend to cloud the intellect, to inflame the passions, or in any way to enslave the higher parts of our nature to the baser.

But neither there nor anywhere else is anything prescribed as to the quantity or quality of food to be taken, or as to any such particulars. Each individual is left by our Church to frame, and observe for himself, according to his own responsible discretion, whatever rules as to these points he may judge most suitable to the *end* proposed;—that of making the body not the master but the servant, and (as far as lies in him) the efficient servant of the spiritual portion of our nature.

Those who, with this view, might find it most advisable to set aside certain days — not indeed as the *only* times on which they should control their appetites, while they should, on others, give a loose to sensuality, but—on which they should use a more sparing diet than ordinary, and who might wish to select those particular days which they and their forefathers had been accustomed so to employ,—these, I conceive, were the persons for whose use the fast-days in the Calendar were marked.

But as there is no injunction for the observance of these days, so, neither are there any directions as to the *mode* in which those who do observe them are to regulate that observance.

If indeed the noting in the Calendar of certain fast-days had been a *novelty* introduced by the Reformers, no such practice having existed before, then indeed it might have been inferred that they designed to establish a positive ordinance on the subject, and had left their work unfinished, having intended to proceed to lay down such precise directions as must evidently be indispensably necessary

for its observance. But as we know that the reverse of this was the fact, there seems no reason to doubt that their design in retaining the fast-days in the Calendar was what has been above suggested; and that they purposely abstained from laying down rules as for a public positive ordinance; meaning to leave the whole matter to the private discretion of each individual Christian.

Our Reformers probably judged it unsafe to make enactments on such a subject, on account of the great difference in men's bodily constitutions. That which would be a dangerously insufficient nourishment for one person, may be repletion, or dangerous excess, to another. The same length of abstinence, or the same kind of diet, which clears and invigorates the mind of one, may produce in another, faintness, unfitness for all action of mind or body, or inaptitude for devout meditation. And the system of *dispensations* which such diversities render necessary, makes an opening, as they doubtless well knew, for endless abuses and scandals.

They judged it best therefore to lay down, in this matter, merely the *principles* on which we ought to act,—the *end* to be aimed at;—and to leave to the discretion and conscience of each individual, the *application* of those principles, and the *means* towards that end.

ESSAY XI.

ON INFANT-BAPTISM.

Controversies arising out of verbal differences.

§ 1 It is not my design to enter on a full discussion of all the questions that have so long agitated the Church, on the subject of Regeneration, and those connected with that. But there is one circumstance pertaining to them which I am most anxious to point out, and to insist on: which is, that among many persons (I do not say *all*) who are, in language, very much opposed to each other on this subject, the opposition is much greater in appearance than in reality. They are engaged, without being aware of it, in a controversy chiefly, if not altogether, *verbal*[1].

Now it must be regarded by all who have anything of a genuine christian spirit, as a most desirable object to obviate as far as possible all unnecessary dissension among Christians, and to bring to a mutual good understanding, as nearly as can be done without compromise of truth, all "who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

For, besides the immediate evils to those who are themselves engaged in any controversy, there is this additional danger also to the christian People generally, that many of them may be disposed to say "Here are questions which are declared by all to be of vital importance, yet on which the

[1] This remark, and a large portion of what follows, is the substance of observations made in several conversations on the subject, by the late Bishop Copleston; to whose memory accordingly I dedicated the Charge from which this Essay was drawn up.

most learned Divines are not agreed. If men apparently pious, and of far greater knowledge and ability than ours, find so much difficulty in agreeing as to the sense of Scripture on points which they regard as of vital importance, what is to them a difficulty must be to us an impossibility; and Scripture can therefore contain no *Revelation*, properly so called; or at least no revelation to the mass of mankind." And the result of these reflections will often be, that some will betake themselves to some supposed infallible Church, or other guide, to whose dictates they will implicitly resign themselves; while others will be, by the same course, led into infidelity[1]. They see that there *is* no infallible, and universally accessible, guide on earth; and moreover, that if there were, it could not possibly be *ascertained*, by men incompetent (by supposition) to exercise their private judgment, and who consequently could never have any good reason for trusting their judgment to decide rightly that most difficult question,—*who* is the appointed guide? and they consequently reject the belief of any divine revelation at all.

It is doubly important therefore to point out—where this can be done with truth—how far difficulties and disputes may have been created, or aggravated, by Theologians themselves; either from their seeking to explain more than God has thought fit to reveal[2]; or from interpreting Scripture according to the technical phraseology of some theological school, or from overlooking variations in the senses in which several words are employed, and thus introducing undetected verbal controversy, and consequent confusion of thought.

The terms "regenerate" and "regeneration" [or New-birth] are commonly employed (as I have remarked in a Work which has been now for many years well known to the Public) in different senses by different persons[3]. "Regeneration" de-

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[1] See Sermon on the *Search after Infallibility*, and Lessons on *Religious Worship*, L. VI.

[2] See Sermon on the *Shepherds at Bethlehem*, and also Lessons on *Religious Worship*, L. VII.

[3] *Logic*, Appendix: Article, "Regeneration."

notes, in the language of some, merely that *admission* to christian privileges and advantages which is the necessary *preliminary* to a christian life. Others employ the term to signify the condition into which a man is brought by that *use* of those advantages and privileges which constitutes a decided christian character. And "regenerate," accordingly, is applied by those persons respectively, to conditions as widely different as that of a new-born infant, and that of a fully-formed adult.

Without attempting to enter on a minute discussion of all the modifications of meaning that have ever been attached to these words, we may at least recognise the employment of them in the two widely-different senses just mentioned. And not only by different persons, but sometimes even by the same, these words (as well as several others) will be found to be occasionally used with different significations. Undesignedly, and unconsciously, a person will sometimes, even at a short interval, slide from one meaning to another, of some of the expressions he is employing.

Now whatever may be the importance of adhering to the most correct use of any term, and whichever may be, in this case, the more correct, it is surely the first point—the first in order, and the first also in importance—to perceive distinctly the ambiguity that does actually exist, and to keep clear of the many injurious misapprehensions which may arise from attributing to those who use a term in one sense, conclusions which depend on its being taken in a different sense.

For example, a person may be exposed to a groundless imputation of leading men into a vain and dangerous reliance on baptismal privileges, and of teaching them that all who have been duly baptized are in a safe state; when perhaps in fact he may have never said or implied any such thing, but may have merely been employing the word "regenerate" according to what *he* regards as the most scriptural usage; and then, has had imputed to him inferences which *would* have followed if he had employed that word in quite another sense.

And perhaps it may turn out on calm investigation, that such a person, and some who had been at first disposed very strongly to censure him, do not in reality disagree to any considerable extent, as to the substance of the doctrines they maintain.

I have seen something like the above imputation thrown out in a Work which several years ago obtained considerable popularity. It was professedly a description (veiled under a slight tale) of various prevailing religious opinions and modes of conduct: and some of the pictures drawn were both striking and just. But among others, a careless clergyman is introduced deprecating any anxiety felt by any of his people as to their spiritual state, and saying that "of course all Christians will be saved; and whoever is baptized is a Christian." Now I feel certain, from long experience and attentive observation, that there is no ground whatever for the imputation here conveyed. I mean, that it is not true (as is evidently designed to be implied) that there exists any party, school, or class of men, among our Clergy,—even the worst of them—who teach such a doctrine. Yet it is probable that the representation was not a designed calumny, but was merely an "idle word," originating in a misconception such as I have been alluding to, as the result of a hasty and inconsiderate interpretation of another's expressions, and of rash inferences therefrom.

Importance of dwelling on points of practical agreement.

§ 2 Let any one then but consider—and this is an inquiry well-becoming those who would cherish a spirit of christian charity—how much there may be of agreement, and that, on the most essential practical points, between men who, at the first glance might appear widely opposed, and who perhaps are inclined to think hardly of each other.

Two persons accustomed to employ, respectively, the word "regeneration" in the different senses just alluded to, may agree in reverencing the Rite of Baptism, and in administering it according to the same rules: both may be also accustomed to warn men against placing an indolent confidence in Gospel-

privileges, and to teach them that to have been enrolled as members of Christ's Church is an advantage for the use of which we are responsible, and which will but increase the condemnation of such as do not "walk worthy of their vocation." Both may teach that (in the words of our 16th Article) "after we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given and fall into sin; and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives[1]." And they may agree in teaching that "God desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live;" and in exhorting every one who does live a careless, an irreligious, or a vicious life, to repent, and seek divine mercy through Christ, and strength to accomplish a thorough reformation: though, in many instances, to the same sort of change which the one of these instructors would call "regeneration" or "new-birth," the other might apply the terms "conversion," "revival," "renewal," &c. Both might agree in teaching that a holy life is the test of effectual, profitable regeneration, and in exhorting all men to lead such a life. On this—the important practical point,—they would not differ at all.

Now if this be so, it cannot but be desirable that men should be at least guarded against supposing themselves (through the influence of the language they employ) to be *more* at variance than they really are. And it is accordingly a point of christian duty, when any such occasion arises, to point

[1] Some Divines of the present day, (professedly of our Church) express doubts, nearly, if not completely, amounting to a denial of the doctrine of this Article; teaching that sins committed after Baptism are either totally unpardonable, or are to be atoned for by Penance. [See Rogers's *Essays*, Vol. II., Essay II., pp. 85, 86.] Should such views prevail, they may be expected to lead first to a rejection of infant-baptism, and afterwards to the practice (not unfrequent in the early Church) of deferring Baptism to the death-bed.

It would be thought by many a cruelty to place a person *without his own consent*, and in unconscious infancy, in a situation, so far, much more disadvantageous than that of those brought up Pagans, that if he did ever —suppose, at the age of fifteen, or twenty—fall into any sin, he must remain for the rest of his life—perhaps for above half a century—deprived of all hope, or at least of all confident hope, of restoration to the divine favour; shut out from all that cheering prospect which, if his baptism in infancy *had been omitted*, might have lain before him.

out the danger of such an error, and thus to promote reconcilement, or at least mitigate hostility, between those engaged in any controversy.

Let no one however calculate on finding that the fulfilment of this duty will obtain for him—for the present at least—the favour or good opinion of the disputants. On the contrary, the most vehement of these will usually bestow their chief applause on the most eloquent champion on their own side; and will even be disposed to charge those who seek to mediate between the contending parties, with lukewarmness or cowardice, or dissimulation;—with ignorance of important truths, or with a readiness to make a base compromise for the sake of human favour.

And it may be added that not only the disputants themselves, but many of the bystanders also, (even those of them who take but little interest in the subject under discussion, for its own sake) will be disposed to heap abuse or derision on any one who appears to come forward as a mediator. For, the vulgar-minded, of all Countries and Ages, and of all ranks, find an amusing excitement in the spectacle of a controversy, analogous to that which attracted the ancient Romans to their gladiatorial shows. And hence they are disposed to feel, or to affect, contempt for any who seeks to mitigate hostility, or to cut short a contest.

Many also, when they hear of any discussion relating to the *employment of terms*, are disposed to turn aside with disdain from one who dwells on what they will regard as a trifling question. For, there are many who have unthinkingly taken for granted as self-evident, a theory of IDEAS, which they suppose themselves to understand; though it is in truth, I am convinced, quite unintelligible, and tends to throw an indistinctness and confusion over most subjects. And hence they are almost unaware of one important function of Language, as an *Instrument of Thought;* imagining its sole use to be the *conveying* of our thoughts to others[1].

[1] See *Elements of Logic:* Introduction.

From various causes therefore whatever censure or contempt the advocates of either party in a dispute may be exposed to from the opposite party, the peace-maker is likely to incur from all[1].

It is true, the most calm and considerate will at once—and many others, after a time, be disposed to do justice to the motives of one who seeks to mediate, and to listen to his reasons. But no one is less likely to gain *present* popularity than one who aims at convincing the parties engaged in a contest, that they are *in reality less opposed* than they appear to be. Those however who are seeking the approbation, not of men but of their divine Master, will remember the blessing He has pronounced on "the peace-makers." And though they would not sacrifice Gospel-truth for the sake of Church-concord, they will be ready to sacrifice for it anything and everything else.

Real difference between those who do and do not hold the predestinarian doctrine.

§ 3 But though some are liable to be engaged (in reference to these points) in a controversy chiefly verbal, there are others, as I have above hinted, between whom an apparently similar controversy will be found to turn on a real opposition of doctrine.

Those who hold that (1) of persons duly admitted into the visible Church by baptism, some are, by an absolute eternal divine decree, secured in all the benefits of Christ's redemption, and others, totally excluded therefrom by the same decree[2], and moreover (2) that this is a truth *set forth in Scripture* as an essential point of faith[3]; these, and the parties opposed to them, must, of course, differ, not in words only, but in the matter of their teaching.

Taking Regeneration to imply (as is generally agreed) *some* kind and degree of benefit—some spiritual gift, or at least *offer* of a gift—they of course deny the term "regenerate" to be at

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1 See Note A, at the end of this Essay.

2 See Note A, at the end of Essay III.; and Note A, at the end of Essay IV.

3 These two, perfectly distinct, assertions, are often confounded together.

all applicable to those Christians whom they consider as excluded by the decree of Omnipotence from all spiritual benefit whatever of Baptism. And the Visible Church, into which members are through this Rite admitted, they must regard as a community not possessing any spiritual endowments whatever; these being, by divine decree, reserved for certain individuals arbitrarily selected from the rest.

Of those who maintain—or at least in their teaching imply—the predestinarian views now alluded to, a considerable portion belong to the Sect which altogether rejects Infant-baptism[1]. And in this I cannot but admit that they are perfectly consistent[2]. Regarding the Rite of Baptism as "an outward and visible *Sign* of an inward spiritual grace" they deem it not allowable, I apprehend, to "put asunder what God has joined together;" and therefore confine the administration of this sign to those respecting whom there is some presumption at least, of their being admitted to a participation in *the thing signified*—the divine grace; which grace, they hold, is, by an eternal absolute decree, bestowed on one portion of those professing Christianity, and denied to the rest. And to which of the two classes any individual *infant* belongs, there cannot possibly be any ground for even the slightest conjecture.

In the case of an Adult they *can* have, it is supposed, (just as in the case of the other Sacrament, the Lord's Supper)—if not a complete and certain knowledge whether he belongs to the Class of the Elect or the Non-elect,—at least some indication from his professions and his conduct; indications which an infant, of course, cannot afford. And they accordingly consider, I apprehend, that Baptism administered to infants cannot be a Sign of Regeneration, since there cannot be even any presumption of its being accompanied by any spiritual advantage at all.

And certainly it must be admitted that according at least

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[1] See Note B, at the end.

[2] See Archbishop Sumner's *Apostolical Preaching*, from which I have subjoined an extract in a Note at the end of this Essay.

to the ordinary use of language, a *Sign* of anything is understood to be such, from its being regularly accompanied by that thing of which it is a sign, or at least, by some reasonable presumption of its presence. When, for instance, we speak of a certain dress or badge being a sign of a man's belonging to a certain Regiment, or Order of Knighthood, or the like, we understand that it is to be something *peculiarly* belonging to them, and serving to distinguish them from others. If a dress, or badge, were worn indifferently by an indefinite number of persons; some belonging to this Regiment or Order, and some not, we should consider that it had ceased to be a *sign* at all, having no longer any *signification*. It is on these grounds, I conceive, that many of those who hold that doctrine of absolute decrees I have been alluding to, adhere to, or have joined, the communion of those calling themselves, and commonly called, Baptists[1].

Our safest and most humbly pious course, however, is, in any practical question, to endeavour to ascertain, in the first instance, what was the practice of the Apostles; and to adhere to that, whenever we think that the rules or customs they sanctioned were not of a merely local or temporary character, but were equally suited to our own Age and Country. And not only is respect due to their *practices*, but these practices will often throw light on their *doctrine;* since whatever *belief*, on any point, seems naturally to be implied in what they were accustomed to *do*, may be presumed to have been *their* belief. And we ought surely rather to put ourselves under their teaching, where it is to be had, than to adopt and act upon the inferences drawn from any theological theory of our own.

Inquiry into the practice of the primitive Church with respect to Baptism.

§ 4 Now with respect to the question of infant-baptism, though there is not in Scripture any express injunction or prohibition relating to it, any one who inquires with an unbiassed mind may arrive, I think, at a complete moral cer-

[1] See Note C, at the end of this Essay.

tainty as to what was the practice of the Apostles and other primitive Christians[1].

For several years, we should remember, they were all *Jews*. And even after the Gentiles had begun to be engrafted into the Church, the Gospel was still, in each place, preached first in the Jewish Synagogue; and the greatest part of the most eminent teachers were of that nation.

Now men brought up under the LAW, would, of course, adhere to the principles of that law, wherever these were not at variance with Christianity; and would be disposed to view everything in the Gospel *according to the analogy* of Judaism, except when *taught otherwise*. And their inspired instructors did teach them otherwise, when there was need. Whenever this disposition was carried to a faulty excess,—as in the well-known instance (Acts xv.) of the attempt to place Gentile-Christians under the Levitical Law,—the error was, we may be sure, as in

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[1] On this point a novel and very strange theory—combining the premises of one party with the conclusion of the opposite—has been devised in Germany, and has been I believe adopted by some few in our own country: namely, that the Apostles never practised or approved infant-baptism, but that nevertheless, we, the Christians of the present day, are quite right in departing from the apostolic principle and institution, and administering the Rite to infants. Though we do not—like the Romish church—claim infallibility, and profess to be under the guidance of Christ's vicegerent on earth, who is authorized to "develop" new doctrines, and to change divine institutions (as in denying the cup to the Laity,) still we are at liberty, it seems, to act as if we did possess this infallible authority, and to improve upon the principles and practice of the Apostles at our own discretion!

I shall not undertake to refute this theory, because I cannot but think that any one who can, on calm reflection, adopt it, must be beyond the reach of argument.

To the Germans we owe many important investigations, and many valuable thoughts. But it cannot be denied that a large portion of them have shown a tendency to be carried away by a craving for originality, and to be misled by their own ingenuity in its pursuit. It was a proverb among the ancient Romans that "Africa was always producing some new monster." And something analogous may be said of Germany.

One way of producing (ideal) monsters, from common materials, is by *combining* incongruous *parts* of things really existing. Such was the fabled Chimæra, which was made up of parts of common and well known animals, joined together as they never were or could be. Such were the Centaurs, and the supposed picture described by Horace in his *Art of Poetry*. And a perfectly *original* theory may be in like manner framed (to which the title of "Chimæra" would not be inapplicable) out of opinions in common circulation, by putting together the conclusions of the one side, and the reasons of the other.

that instance, promptly corrected, and firmly resisted by the Apostles.

Now Baptism having always been clearly understood to be the initiatory rite by which members were admitted into the christian Church[1], it cannot, I think, be doubted, by any unprejudiced inquirer, that the early Christians must have been prepared to observe the like rules in admitting (by Baptism) members into the christian Church, to those they had been accustomed to, in reference to the Jewish. If it had been the rule to admit Adults only into the Mosaic Covenant—if infancy had been a bar to any one's reception, then, they would never have thought of baptizing *children* into the christian Church, unless *expressly commanded* to do so. If—as is the fact—they had been accustomed to enrol in the *Jewish* Church their own infants, and proselytes of all ages, then, they would, as a matter of course, adhere to the same rule, in reference to the *Christian* Church, unless *expressly forbidden*[2]. And so strong and universal must have been the disposition to bring to Baptism the *children* of believers, that if this had not been allowable, we should undoubtedly have found in the New Testament most distinct and frequent notices of its prohibition. As for distinct injunctions or recommendations, these could not have been at all needed in favour of any practice about which there had never been any hesitation.

And as for the many scruples and questions that have been raised relative to infant-baptism, none of these would be likely even to occur to their minds; because they had been familiar all their lives with the admission into the Mosaic Covenant of

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[1] Agreeably to our Lord's charge to his Apostles (Matthew xxviii.) the exact rendering of which is "make disciples of all nations" (i. e. enrol them as members of the church) "by baptizing them into the name," &c.

The *marginal* rendering of μαθητεύσατε in our Bible is preferable to that in the text.

See also Acts viii. 36 and x. 47.

[2] "There is a *presumption* in favour of every existing institution. Many of these (we will suppose the majority) may be susceptible of alteration for the better: but still, the 'burden of proof' lies with him who proposes an alteration, simply on the ground that since a change is not a good in itself, he who demands a change should show cause for it."—*Elements of Rhetoric.*

infants, incapable, at the time, of availing themselves of, or at all understanding, the benefits of that Covenant.

The Gospel viewed by the earliest Christians through the medium of the Law.

§ 5 We have therefore, I conceive, a complete moral certainty that the earliest Christians did practise infant-baptism, and that it received at least the tacit sanction and approval of the Apostles; whose prohibitions of it we should not have failed to find recorded, had it been at all objectionable.

But in this, and in several other points also, difficulties, and sometimes serious mistakes, are likely to arise from want of sufficient care to view the Gospel through the medium of the *Law*;—to recollect, that is, not only that the Mosaic Dispensation itself was the forerunner and type of the christian, which fulfilled and extended it, but also that Christianity was first preached *by*, and *to*, men who had been brought up Jews; and that accordingly we must carefully consider, and steadily keep in mind, what were the habits and modes of thought, of Jews, of that Age and Country, and in what way *they* would be likely to understand and to act upon the precepts and doctrines delivered to them. For, the interpretations which were the most obvious to *them* will be often different from what may be the most obvious to *us* of the present day. And again, it will often happen that what were to them the greatest difficulties (as, for instance, the admission of the Gentiles to be "fellow-heirs") will be, to us, no difficulties at all. And whatever meaning presented itself to *their* minds, may be presumed to be the right one, whenever they were not taught otherwise by their inspired guides the Apostles, who were at hand to correct any mistakes they might fall into.

Thus, for instance, if we would inquire what we are to understand by "Saints"—"God's People"—and "the Elect" ["chosen"] &c. our safest course (as was remarked in Essay III.) is to look to the sense in which an *Israelite* had been accustomed to hear those words employed, and to consider how

he would be likely to understand them, by analogy, in reference to the Gospel-dispensation[1].

And so also, if we would understand what was meant by the "baptizing of a Household," which we read of in the New Testament—whether it included, or not, the *infant-children* of the believing parents,—our guide should be the practice of the Israelites in reference to any Gentile-family, the Heads of which had renounced idolatry, and desired to be admitted as proselytes—as Israelites by adoption,—into the number of God's Chosen People under the Old Dispensation. "Let ALL his males be circumcised, and then let him draw near and eat the Passover," was the direction of the Law under which they acted.

And if an intelligent and well-disposed Israelite had been asked, what benefit he contemplated as accruing from enrolment in the number of God's People, to an infant, incapable of either obeying or disobeying the Law, and of enjoying, or understanding, the promised blessings of the Covenant, he would probably have replied, that the child—being dedicated to the Lord by Jewish parents or guardians, solemnly bound to instruct and bring him up as a Jew,—might be expected, as soon as he should be able, and as far as he should be able, to understand these things, to become, gradually, an observer of the Law, and a partaker of its benefits; and that, then, he would not obtain a new *possession* of something which, before, was not his, but would merely enter on the full enjoyment of a benefit previously conferred on him.

The case, in short, would be viewed as analogous to some which occur every day in the ordinary business of life. In the common language, for instance, of secular business, a person is said to have *received*—as a payment, or as a gift,—such and such a sum of money; even when no *money* is actually handed to him, but only a *draft* on some banker who is ready to pay it as soon as presented. And we speak of him as having re-

[1] See Sermon on *Christian Saints*.

ceived this sum, although we know that he may possibly not present the draft for several days or weeks; or may even, through gross negligence, fail ever to present it at all. Or again, take the case of an infant inheriting an estate, or a title, or the "freedom" of some corporation. Though not capable, at the time, of profiting by, or understanding these advantages, he will subsequently become so; and will then, if he use them aright, not *acquire* any new possession, but derive the suitable advantages from those to which he was already entitled. And even as the inheritor of a fortune may, when he grows up, make either a good or an ill use of his wealth, so, any one, whether the child of an Israelite by birth, or of a Proselyte admitted into the Jewish Church, might in after-life, either avail himself rightly of the privileges thus bestowed on him, or convert them into a curse, by his neglect or abuse of them.

And supposing this latter case—supposing the son of some devout Proselyte to have become an idolater, or in some other way a transgressor of the Law—he would, no doubt, have been admonished (by a Prophet, or other pious Jew) not, to *become* an Israelite—not, to seek *admission* into the number of God's chosen People,—but, to repent, and *return* to the Lord, to *reform* his life, and to walk worthy of the privileges to which he had been admitted.

Now all this, an intelligent and pious Jew who should have embraced the Gospel, would naturally be inclined to apply, by analogy, to the case of the Christian-dispensation.

Paul's view of the analogy between the Old and the New Dispensations.

§ 6 And accordingly, one of the most eminent of these—the Apostle Paul himself—directs the attention of his converts to such an analogy: applying the very word "*baptized*" to the Israelites on their deliverance from Egypt; whom he speaks of as being *all* "chosen" to be partakers of special divine favours; while yet,—as he reminds the Corinthians (1 Cor. x.)—most[1] of those very men "were overthrown in the

[1] τοῖς πλείοσιν.

wilderness;" not, according to any eternal divine decree (at least he mentions none) excluding them from the promised blessings, but as a consequence of their obstinate rebellions. It was because "they thought scorn of that pleasant land, and gave no credence unto his word," that the Lord "sware unto them that they should not enter into his rest." And all "these things," Paul tells the Corinthians, "are written for the admonition" of Christians.

It is thus that (as I have remarked above) we may plainly learn from the *practice* of the early Church, what were the *doctrines* taught in it. Having ascertained what the early Christians were accustomed, under the guidance of the Apostles, to *do*, in reference to the administration of Baptism, we may thence safely infer what was their *belief* on the subject.

And here it is to be remarked, by the way, that I have been representing a pious and intelligent Israelite as speaking, all along, of the case of children brought forward for dedication to the Lord, *by parents or guardians designing to educate them accordingly.* He would surely never imagine that any one could have a right or a power, to admit into the Mosaic Covenant a Gentile infant who was to be brought up as a heathen. And, by parity of reasoning, he would not, as a Christian, regard as of any avail, or as a valid Baptism at all, the performance of an outward ceremony on an infant that is to be brought up—as far as we know and believe—in entire ignorance of christian duties and privileges. No one would be regarded as sowing seed to any purpose,—or indeed as, in correct language, *sowing* it at all, who should purposely scatter corn on the trodden way-side, with a full knowledge that it would be immediately "devoured by the fowls of the air," instead of springing up, and producing, "first the blade, then the ear, and afterwards the full corn in the ear."

I mention this, because there are instances recorded, of priests administering by stealth (through mistaken pious charity) what they regard as the rite of christian Baptism, to

the infants of savages, or of Chinese or Hindu Idolaters[1]. But in *our* Church it is plain no such procedure is recognized. Our Formularies all along most plainly contemplate the case of a child *brought* to Baptism by persons pledging themselves to its education as a Christian. In the narrative so earnestly dwelt on in the baptismal Service, the children brought to our Lord for his blessing, must evidently have been the children of *believing* parents[2]. And all the declarations made in our Formularies—the hopes expressed—the Prayers—the Exhortations—in short, everything that is said—must evidently be understood as proceeding on this supposition.

And accordingly, the very reason assigned in the Catechism for its being allowable to administer Baptism to infants, is, that as there are certain indispensable *conditions* of the benefits promised to them, so, the fulfilment of these conditions is promised *by* them, through their Sureties[3].

As for the "remission of sins" at Baptism[4], so frequently alluded to in our Services, this, it is plain, cannot be under-

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[1] The question has been raised, what should be our procedure in reference to a person to whom an intended baptism had been thus rashly administered, supposing him (as is not at all inconceivable) to come, *subsequently*, to a knowledge of the Gospel: are we, it has been asked, to repeat in such a case, the external ceremony?

The question, in any such case, evidently amounts to this: whether he has been really baptized or not? For it has always been universally held that Baptism is a rite which cannot be *repeated*; since no one can be *admitted* a member of a Society of which he is a member already.

In every case therefore in which there is a *doubt* as to the answer to that question, our Church has provided a *conditional* Form expressly to meet such a case. [See *Rubric* to the Office for Private Baptism.]

As for the question, *who* are the persons to whom the office is, or should be entrusted, of administering the rite of Baptism? On this I have made (in the Second Essay on the *Kingdom of Christ*) some remarks which are extracted in the Note D at the end of this Essay.

[2] See Luke xviii. 15. The right rendering of τὰ βρέφη evidently is, in this passage "their infants." The article (which our Translators are apt to overlook altogether) has often the sense of our possessive pronoun. So it has also in French. "I have a pain in my head," would be rendered "j'ai mal à *la* tête."

[3] See Note E at the end.

[4] The words, in the Nicene Creed, "one Baptism for the remission of sins" were eagerly appealed to by some, in a recent controversy, as quite decisive of the questions at issue. They seem to have not known, or to have forgotten, that those words were introduced in reference to a totally different question; —one relating to *repetition* of Baptism.

stood of *actual* sins, in the case of an *infant*, which is not a moral agent at all, nor capable of either transgressing or obeying God's laws,—of resisting, or of following the suggestions of his Spirit. Nor again can it mean an entire removal and abolition of the frail and sinful nature,—the "*phronema sarkos*" inherited by every descendant of Adam; since our 9th Article expressly declares that this "remaineth even in those that are regenerate[1]." But it seems to denote that those duly baptized are considered no longer as children of the condemned and disinherited Adam—as no longer aliens from God[2]—disqualified for his service—and excluded from the offers of the Gospel, but are received into the number of God's adopted children, and have thrown open to them, as it were, the treasury of divine grace, through which, if they duly avail themselves of it, though not otherwise—they will attain final salvation[3].

Views of our Reformers concerning Baptism.

§ 7 This seems to be the most simple and unforced interpretation of the language of our Church in various passages of her Formularies:

[1] There certainly is, in some portions of the baptismal-service, an indistinctness and confusedness of language (excellent as the Service is, as a whole) which one would gladly see remedied. For, we read, in the same Service, of the "remission" to infants "of all *their sins*," and of an exhortation to "all men to follow *their innocency*." Of the "imputation" of Adam's transgression, I have treated at large in Essay VI.: subjoining an extract from Archbishop Sumner's *Apostolical Preaching*.

[2] This is doubtless what is meant by the expression "children of wrath," in the Catechism, and "deserving God's wrath," in the Ninth Article. The Reformers could not have meant the words "God's *wrath*" to be understood in their literal sense; since they had laid it down in the First Article that God is "without body, parts, or *passions*."

[3] Those who seek to go as far as they can towards doing away all connexion of spiritual benefit with Baptism, and reducing it to a mere sign of admission into a *community possessing no spiritual endowments at all*, sometimes appeal to the case of Cornelius and his friends, on whom "the Holy Ghost fell" before they were baptized. But they seem to forget that this was the *miraculous gift of tongues, of prophecy*, &c., which never was, *nor was ever supposed* to be, the "inward spiritual grace" of Baptism. It was never conferred at Baptism; [see Acts viii 16,] but was always bestowed, except in this one case, (in which there was an obvious reason for the exception,) through the laying on of hands of an Apostle [see Acts xix. 6]. And accordingly the Romans, when Paul wrote to them [Rom. i. 11], had received no miraculous gifts, though they were baptized Christians, and are reminded by the Apostle that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his."

as for instance in the Catechism, where the Catechumen speaks of "Baptism, wherein I was made a child of God . . . and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven;" and again, where it is said that "being by nature born in sin . . . we are hereby made the children of Grace."

Now this placing of a person in a different condition from that in which he was originally born, may, not unaptly, be designated (as it appears to be, by our Reformers) by the term "Regeneration" or "New-birth[1]."

But no one can suppose that they regarded the sowing of seed, as the same thing with the full maturity of the corn for harvest, or as necessarily implying it. To be born into the natural world, is not the same thing as to be grown up: nor can it be pronounced of every infant that is born, that it *will*, necessarily, grow up into manly maturity. So, also, our Reformers never meant to teach that every one who is baptized is sure of salvation, independently of his "leading the rest of his life according to this beginning;" [*Baptismal Service*;] or again, that we can be infallibly sure that he *will* do so; any more than we can pronounce with certainty (according to the analogy of a temporal inheritance, above alluded to) that one who has an estate bequeathed to him, will claim his inheritance in proper form, and will also make that right use of his wealth on which depends its becoming a real blessing to him.

The expression "an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven" seems to be used in reference to the *tendency*, and the suitable *result*, of an admission into the Church of Christ. And such a kind of language is often employed by all Writers: and not least, by the Apostles. When, for instance, the Apostle John says that "whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World, and that every one who is born of God, doth not commit sin," it cannot be supposed that he meant to attribute to Christians

[1] The Ninth Article has, in the original Latin, the word, "renati," twice; translated, first, "regenerate," and afterwards, "baptized." See Note F at the end.

moral *perfection*, and *impeccability;* when, on the contrary, he exhorts them to "confess their sins." Far was it from his design, to teach that one who did but feel convinced of having experienced the new-birth, might safely remit his exertions, and relax his vigilance against sin, and "count himself to have apprehended" and to be thenceforward sure of divine acceptance, and of everlasting life, without "taking heed lest he fall." On the contrary, he was writing—as is well known—in opposition to those Gnostics of his day, who were grossly Antinomian, and who, while they professed to "have no sin" in God's sight, and to be sure of salvation through their supposed "knowing the Gospel" (Gnosis), lived a life of flagrant immorality.

In contradiction to these monstrous tenets, he declares that every one who has a well-grounded "hope in Christ, purifieth himself, even as He is pure:"—that a sinful life is *inconsistent* with the character of the "sons of God;"—that the *tendency*, in short, and suitable result of being "born of God," is opposed to the commission of sin.

And indeed, in all subjects, it is a very common mode of speaking, to attribute to any person or thing, some quality, which, though not an *invariable*, is a *suitable*, or natural, attribute, and may reasonably be looked for therein.

In this way, many words have come to vary gradually from their original signification. For instance, to "cure," in its etymological sense, (from "curare") signifies to take *care* of a patient, and to administer medicines. In its present use, it implies the *successful* administration.

So also it is with the word θεραπεύω, which, in the language of the New Testament Writers, signifies not to *tend*, but to heal.

In like manner we often, figuratively, *deny* some title to an object that is wanting in those qualities which *ought* to belong to it, or which that title suggests as a natural and consistent accompaniment, and what may fairly be expected. Thus, for instance, in speaking of some act of excessive baseness or de-

pravity, it is not uncommon to say "one who would be guilty of this, is *not* a MAN:" meaning, of course that such conduct is unworthy of the manly character; — inconsistent with what may be fairly expected from a *man*, as such; and more suitable to the brutish nature[1]. But so far are we from understanding that any one who acts thus unworthily, is not, strictly and literally, a man, that on the contrary, this is the very ground of our censure. We condemn a *man* who acts the part of a brute, precisely *because* he *is* a man—a Being from whom something better might have been looked for—and *not* one of the brute-creation.

Again, any one might say of a garden that was greatly neglected, and over-run with wild plants, "this is *not* a *garden*," or "it does not deserve the name of a garden;" though it is precisely because it is, literally, a garden, that we speak thus contemptuously of it: since, in an uncultivated spot, the sight of a luxuriant wild vegetation does not offend the eye.

It is in a similar mode of speaking that Paul declares, that "he is not a Jew who is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart," &c.[2], meaning, as, no doubt, every one must have understood him, that one who is not in his heart, and his conduct, a servant of the Lord, is wanting in what *ought* to characterize the Lord's People,—is *inconsistent* with his profession, and an *unworthy* member of the Jewish Church;—one who will derive no benefit, but the contrary, from the privileges to which he has been admitted as a Jew. For it is because such a one *is*, literally a Jew, that he will incur a heavier penalty than an unenlightened Heathen.

He might equally well have said—and doubtless would

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[1] "I dare do all that may become a *man;*
Who dares do more, is *none.*"
Macbeth.
Some remarks on this kind of language, in reference to another subject, will be found in the treatise on *Rhetoric*, Part III. chapter iii. § 3.

[2] Rom. ii. 28.

have been ready to say—according to the same kind of figure—that he is not a "baptized" Christian—he is not "regenerate"—who is so outwardly alone, and has nothing of the christian character within. And indeed the Apostle Peter actually does employ similar language in speaking of Baptism, (which, he says, "saveth us") when he says that it is "not the putting away the filth of the flesh," (*i.e.* the outward application of water) "but the answer of a good conscience towards God;" not meaning that a person deficient in this has not been, literally, and in the strict and proper sense of the word, baptized at all, and needs to have that rite administered to him; but that he is wanting in that which is the proper and beneficial *result* of an admission into the christian Church.

And corresponding forms of expression are very common, on various subjects; and seldom give rise to any error, or confusion of thought, or obscurity, except in those cases (religious discussions are among the principal) in which men under the influence of some strong prejudice, exercise their ingenuity in seeking for any thing that may serve as an argument, and in interpreting words according to the letter and against the spirit, for the sake of supporting some favourite theory.

Importance of using various expressions to convey the same truth.

§ 8. Once more then I would invite attention to the importance of examining carefully, in any controversy that may arise, how far it may turn on differences in the expressions employed. Let any two persons, whose views appear at the first glance, widely at variance, be prevailed on to depart, for a time at least, from the strict technical language of a theological School, and to state, in as *many different forms as possible*, what is the practical advice they would give to each Christian, under various circumstances: and it will often come out, that one whom his neighbour had perhaps been at first disposed to condemn as abandoning some fundamental truths of Christianity, has, in fact, merely avoided the particular

terms in which the other has been accustomed to express them; and the difference between the parties is not such, either in degree or in kind, as had been supposed[1].

In guarding however against verbal controversies *mistaken for real*[2], I would not be understood as thinking little of the importance of careful accuracy of language. Indeed, the very circumstance that inattention to this may lead to serious mistakes as to our meaning, would alone be sufficient to show how needful it is to be careful as to our mode of expression.

For instance, cases have come under my own knowledge, in which an active minister, sincerely attached to our Church, has found, to his astonishment and mortification, that his people were, one by one, dropping off into the Sect of the Baptists; and that these seceders were almost exclusively the very persons who had been the most attentive to his instructions, and the most promising. This circumstance induced me, when consulted on such a case, to inquire carefully as to the language which he had employed in speaking of Baptism and points connected therewith. And I found, and pointed out to the complainant, that he had been, in fact, undesignedly preparing the way for these conversions, by using such expressions as were likely to be understood, and actually had been understood, in a sense favouring the Baptist-doctrine: so that his most attentive hearers, whenever they came in the way of a teacher of that Persuasion, were induced to adopt at once the inferences from the premises already established in their minds.

However charitably we may judge of the members of that

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[1] At the time when the first outcry was raised against Dr. Hampden's *Bampton Lectures*, many persons, no doubt, who joined in it, had no design to commit injustice, but had been taught to think that the work was really unsound.

He had traced to the School-men many of the phrases which are commonly employed in expressing certain doctrines; and hence it was rashly inferred that he intended to represent the doctrines themselves as of human origin. The inference was drawn by those (the great majority of his censurers), who had *never read* the work itself, but only artfully-garbled extracts.—See *The Church and the Universities.*

[2] See *Logic*, "Verbal Questions."

(or of any other) communion, it is clearly the duty of members of a Church which does allow infant-baptism, to guard against being so understood as to encourage secession from that Church.

And here it may be remarked, that the Clergy have an especial opportunity, and an especial call, for giving early, and full, and systematic instruction on all the points here touched on, in their discharge of that most important branch of their duty, the preparing of children for the solemn Ordinance of CONFIRMATION. The course of that preparation affords them a most fitting occasion for explaining to them the character of the Sacraments according to the views of our Church; which evidently designs to make Confirmation, not a distinct Sacrament, but a connecting link between the two;—a kind of supplement and completion to the one, and an introduction to the other[1]. And this sacred rite has the advantage, when duly administered to persons properly prepared, of obviating every reasonable objection to the practice of Infant-Baptism, and thus justifying, and exhibiting as an harmonious whole, the system of Church-ordinances established by our Reformers.

Effects produced by unchristian bitterness in controversy.

§ 9 The importance of taking care not to exaggerate differences, or hastily to form harsh judgments, I have dwelt on with especial earnestness, in treating of the present subject, on account

[1] It was with a view to impress this the more strongly on the minds of all the parties concerned, that I adopted in my own diocese the plan of adding on the Communion-Service to that of Confirmation, and receiving no candidates for Confirmation but such as were prepared to attend the Lord's Table immediately. The error was thus the more effectually guarded against (an error which I well knew to be prevalent), of bringing forward for Confirmation persons unfit or unwilling to partake of the Eucharist; and who, too often, never do partake of it at all.

That this is quite at variance with the design of our Church, I took occasion to set forth in a *Tract on Confirmation*, from which I have subjoined an extract in Note G at the end of this Essay.

The experience of many years, during which this course has been blessed with the happiest results, and the strong testimony of the most assiduous and judicious of the Clergy have fully confirmed my original conviction of its expediency.

of the contests relative to that subject which have, of late years, been agitating our Church[1]. These contests have been conducted by some, unhappily, of those engaged on each side, with not a little of unchristian acrimony. And the tone of insolence, and of bitterness, displayed by some of the disputants, which has been strongly and justly censured by some of their opponents, has been imitated by those opponents. They have been guilty to at least an equal degree of the very faults they had been condemning.

Such contests have excited the exulting scorn, not only of infidels, but of those Christians of various denominations, whose zeal for their Sect or Church outweighs their regard for the Universal-Church of Christ, and in whom party-spirit has nearly swallowed up the true spirit of the Gospel.

Among others, we find the members of a Church which professes to be, not a branch, but the whole, of the Catholic,—*i.e. Universal*—Church (and which, if so, must comprehend *all* Christians, of whatever Denomination) taunting other Churches —parts of *itself*, supposing its pretensions just—with their internal dissensions, and representing its own (alleged) exemption from discord, and unity of doctrine, as a mark of divine truth[2].

But however justly we may censure such exultation, great must be the grief, at the occasion given for it, that must be felt by those of the most truly christian character. Greatly must such a man, whether of our own communion or of any other, be shocked at the spectacle of dissensions among pro-

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1 For some remarks on the particular contest chiefly alluded to, see Note H at the end of this Essay.

2 Most of those to whom such reasoning is addressed will not know, or will not recollect, that this mark belonged most emphatically to Pagan Rome under the persecuting Emperors, and to Nebuchadnezzar when he set up his "image of gold." For, these decreed, and promptly executed their decrees, as far as their power extended, that whosoever refused to worship as commanded, should be cast into the fire.

On the incompatibility of the two claims,—that to *universality*, and that to exemption from *divisions and errors*, I have treated formerly, in works from which extracts are given in Note I at the end of this Essay.

fessing Christians, and of the evil passions which are too often called forth and displayed on such occasions.

I have said "called forth and displayed" because one cannot but feel convinced, on reflection—and it is one of the most painful reflections suggested by the circumstances attendant on controversies—that the evil dispositions thus called into action, must have *existed* before, in persons in whom perhaps they had never been suspected.

Uncharitable bigotry, unscrupulous and reckless party-spirit, spiritual pride, revengefulness, malice, and the like, are not dispositions which could be suddenly *created*, though they may be suddenly aroused and called into activity,—and also fostered and increased,—by the excitement of a contest. They must have been in existence already;—unknown probably to the persons themselves, as well as to the bystanders;—under an appearance of christian meekness, and candour, and charity.

Where a pool of transparent water, and which seemingly contains no impurity, becomes, on being *agitated*, suddenly turbid and foul, we are certain that the offensive impurities thus thrown up are not called into *existence* by that agitation, but must have been lying *at the bottom* during the period of tranquillity and apparent purity.

And even so, we are compelled to admit the mortifying conclusion, that the faults and follies which we see stirred up by an agitating contest, must have been all along latent in the breast of many a one who had been regarded by others, and probably by himself, as of a far different character.

What any one's conduct *would* be, under each particular kind of trial, none but the Searcher of hearts can know with complete certainty before the trial is actually made. It is for us, especially to examine and distrust *ourselves*—to keep a vigilant guard over our own hearts,—and to act on the apostolic precept, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

NOTES TO ESSAY XI.

Note A, p. 283.

This severity is so far from being mitigated in cases where Religion is concerned, that, on the contrary, the phrase "odium theologicum" has become proverbial. I cannot but wonder therefore that in a very able Article in the *Edinburgh Review* (April, 1850) theological literature "should be spoken of as a protected literature." Indeed, the Reviewer himself seems, in what he had said just above (p. 526) to establish the opposite conclusion. Some remarks on this point, introduced into a recent edition of a vol. of *Essays* (1st Series) I here subjoin.

"The case of Bishop Warburton, however, is only one out of many that could be adduced in disproof of what has been said as to 'Theological literature being a *protected* literature.' The fear of odium may indeed sometimes deter a man from writing *against* the prevailing religion; but if any one in writing *for* it calculates on exemption from attacks, he is not unlikely to be greatly disappointed. If he write in defence of the tenets of his own communion, he may perhaps be assailed (supposing his work to attract any considerable notice) not only by the members of other communions, but by very many fellow-members of his own; who will perhaps charge him with 'paradox,' or 'heresy;' or with going too far, or not far enough; or with having advanced—or not having advanced—beyond his own original principles; or perhaps with all of these faults at once[1]. Or if, again, he writes in defence of Christianity generally, he will probably be censured by a greater number of Christians, of various denominations, than of anti-christians. In the extracts from several writers (to which many others might have been added), printed in parallel columns at the end of the Appendix to the *Logic*, a specimen may be seen of the sort of 'protection' likely to be enjoyed by a work on christian Evidence. Some who are sincere believers, if not in the *truth* of Christianity, at least in its *utility* to the mass of the People, are afraid that these would be shaken in their belief

[1] "That all these complaints have been made not only of the same individual, but *by* members of the same religious party, may seem something almost incredible; but it is a fact.

by inquiry and reflection[1]. Others, again, being anxious that the People should believe not only in the divine origin of Christianity, but in several *other* things besides, of which *no* satisfactory proof can be afforded, are fearful of giving any one the habit of seeking, and finding good grounds for, *one portion* of his faith, lest he should require equally valid reasons for believing the rest, and should reject what cannot be so proved; and, accordingly, they prefer that the whole should be taken on trust—on the strength of mere assertion. And enthusiasts, again, of all descriptions, being accustomed to believe whatever they do believe on the evidence of their own feelings and fancies alone, are most indignant against any one who —in compliance with the apostolic precept—endeavours to give—and to teach others to give—'a reason of the hope that is in them.'

"On the whole, therefore, it does not appear that anything like 'protection' can be reckoned on, for works either on Christianity itself, or on any particular doctrines of it."

Note B, p. 284.

The proper designation of these is Antipædobaptists. But this, though otherwise unexceptionable, is so awkwardly long a title, that it is not in common use. The title of "Baptists" and that of "Anabaptists," are both alike objectionable, as being what J. Bentham calls "question-begging appellatives;" the former implying that their distinctive tenet is *right;* the other that it is an error.

For, when an adult who had been baptized in infancy joins their communion, they administer to him the Rite according to their own system. And to call this a "*re*-baptizing" (as is implied by the term Anabaptist) is to assume that his original baptism was real and valid; which is the very point they deny. On the other hand, the term Baptist, as a distinguishing appellation, implies that *they* alone really baptize, and that the—so-called—baptism of all others is void and unreal; which is equally to prejudge the question on the other side.

It should be added that those I have been alluding to are what are called "Particular-Baptists." There is another Denomination (which, I understand, is much less numerous) called "General-

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[1] "A speaker in an illustrious assembly professed (according to the reporters) his firm adherence to the religion of the Established Church, as being 'the religion of his ancestors.' And this sentiment was received with cheers: some of the hearers probably not recollecting that on that principle the worship of Thor and Woden would claim precedence.

Baptists," who do not teach the predestinarian doctrines alluded to.

On the subject of "terms of reproach," I have offered some remarks in the Appendix to the third Series of Essays.

Any one who deprecates, as a reproachful term, or for any other reason, the application of some name to the church or class he belongs to, should be careful to adopt for it some designation which does not imply a *reproach to his neighbours;* else, though these may be wrong in the term they employ, *he* at least has no right to complain.

In reference to what I have said of the "Particular-Baptists," a Writer in one of their Periodicals, vehemently and indignantly disclaimed on their behalf the doctrine of Reprobation.

It was far from my intention to impute to any persons (not advocates of the system called "Economy," "Double-doctrine" or "Reserve") opinions they disavow. But I had always understood that there is a portion (and much the largest portion) of the Baptist-denomination, that are commonly designated as Calvinistic, and account themselves such. And Calvin (see Note A to Essay III. p. 98) not only inculcates the doctrine of reprobation, but insists on its being *inseparable* from his doctrine of Election, and derides as silly and puerile the attempt to disjoin them.

Now the Writer I have alluded to, does not say whether those of his communion disclaim the title of Calvinist; which has a manifest tendency to mislead, if applied to any one who rejects one fundamental article of Calvin's system. Nor does he give any explanation of the sense in which he and his friends hold the doctrine of Election, so as not to imply, necessarily, Reprobation; an explanation which is evidently requisite; since, else, a man must certainly be regarded as *teaching*—whatever may be his own inward belief—anything that is clearly implied in what he does say.

In reference to the subject here treated of, I take the liberty of extracting a passage from a Work which has been for many years well known, and highly esteemed, by the Public.

"Another practical evil of the doctrine of special grace, is the necessity which it implies of some test of God's favour, and of the reconcilement of Christians to him, beyond and subsequent to the covenant of baptism. St. Paul, it has been seen, insists upon the necessity of regeneration: he declares that 'the natural man *receiveth not the things of God, neither can know them:*' he calls the heathen nations '*children of wrath*,' and '*sinners of the Gentiles:*' he speaks of the '*old man* as *being corrupt* according to the deceitful lusts:' in short, he expresses, under a variety of terms[1],

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[1] Rom. ii. 6, &c.

the assertion of our Saviour, that 'except a man be born again, of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' John iii. 3.

"With equal clearness he intimates, that the Christians he addresses *were* thus regenerate: as having '*put off the old man* with its deeds;' and having become the 'temple of the *Holy Ghost*,' and 'the *members of Christ*;' as having the '*spiritual circumcision*, and being *buried* with Christ *in baptism*;' Rom. vi. 3; Col. ii. 12; as having '*received the spirit of adoption*,' Rom. viii. 15; and as 'being *washed, sanctified, and justified*, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' To the Galations, 'bewitched' as he says they were, 'that they should not obey the truth,' he still writes, 'Ye are the *children of God* by faith in Christ Jesus. For, as many of you as *have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*.' Gal. iii. 26. These addresses and exhortations are founded on the principle that the disciples, by their dedication to God in baptism, had been brought into a state of reconcilement with Him, had been admitted to privileges which the Apostle calls on them to improve. On the authority of this example, and of the undeniable practice of the first ages of Christianity, our Church considers Baptism as conveying regeneration, instructing us to pray, before baptism, that the infant 'may be *born again*, and made an heir of everlasting salvation;' and to return thanks, after baptism, 'that it *hath* pleased God to *regenerate* the infant with his Holy Spirit, and receive him for his own child by adoption.'

"But, on the contrary, if there is a distinction between special and common grace, and none are regenerate but those who receive special grace, and those only receive it who are elect; baptism is evidently no sign of regeneration, since so many after baptism live profane and unholy lives, and perish in their sins. Therefore, the preacher of special grace must, consistently with his own principles, lead his hearers to look for some new conversion, and expect some sensible regeneration. This brings him to use language in the highest degree perplexing to an ordinary hearer. To take an example from the same writer, whose only fault is the inconsistency to which he is reduced by his attachment to the system of election: 'The best duties of unregenerate men are no better in God's account and acceptance, than abomination. There is nothing that such men do, in the whole course of their lives, but at the last day it will be found in God's register-book, among the catalogue of their sins. This man hath prayed so often, and heard so often; made so many prayers, and heard so many sermons, and done many good works; but yet, all this while, he was in an unconverted estate: these, therefore, are set down in God's day-book in black; and they are registered among those sins that he must give an account for: not for the *substance of the actions* themselves, but because they

come from rotten principles, that defile the best actions which he can perform[1].'

"Suppose this language addressed now, as it was originally, to a congregation dedicated to Christ in baptism. What would be the feelings of a plain understanding, or a timid conscience, unable to unravel the windings of these secret things, on learning that the sinfulness or innocency of actions does not depend upon their being permitted or forbidden in the revealed law, but on the doer being in a regenerate or unregenerate state at the time when he performs them? How is this fact of *regeneracy*, upon which no less than eternity depends, to be discovered? The Apostle enumerates the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit; but his test is insufficient, for the two lists are here mixed and confounded. The hearers appeal to the Church, an authorized interpreter of Scripture. The Church acquaints them, that they were themselves regenerated, and made the children of grace, by the benefit of baptism; while the preacher evidently treats them as if it were possible they might be still unregenerate."—*Sumner's Apostolical Preaching.*

NOTE C, p. 285.

IT seems not unlikely that the same causes may have operated in favour of that sect also which rejects the Sacraments altogether. As for the argument which I have known put forward with apparent seriousness, that the *word* SACRAMENT does not occur in Scripture, and that, therefore, we ought not to have any, this can hardly have had any real influence on intelligent minds. For, one might as well urge, that since the word "virtue" does not occur in our Lord's discourses, therefore He did not mean his followers to practise virtue.

But at the time when that sect arose, a very large proportion of christian ministers, while they were administering to infants a Rite which they spoke of as a sign of Regeneration, (or New-birth,) at the same time taught—at least; were understood as teaching—that there is no intelligible connexion whatever between the sign and the thing signified, nor any real benefit attached to the Rite. The new-birth they taught their people to hope for at some future indefinite time. And they taught them to believe, as a part of the

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[1] "Hopkins on the *New Birth*. Observe the difference between his language and our judicious Reformers': 'Since actions which spring not of faith in Christ, are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not *but that they have the nature of sin*.' Art. xiii.

christian revelation, that, of infants brought to baptism, an uncertain, indefinite number of individuals—*undistinguishable* at that time from the rest—are, by the divine decree, totally and finally excluded from all share in the benefits of Christ's redemption.

Now, men accustomed to see and hear all this, would be not unlikely to listen with favour to those who declared—professedly by divine inspiration—that "water-baptism," as they call it, is an empty and superstitious ceremony, originating in a misapprehension of our Lord's meaning; of which meaning they—gifted with the same inspiration as his Apostles—are commissioned to be interpreters.

And when one Sacrament had been thus explained away, the rejection of the other also, according to a similar kind of reasoning, would follow of course.

And, after all, this rejection was but the carrying out of a principle of procedure which had been long before sanctioned by others. It had been long before decided that, at the Eucharist, one of the appointed symbols might safely be omitted, and that the perfect spiritual participation by the Communicants in the benefit of the Sacrament is not thereby at all impaired. To dispense with the other symbol also, and likewise with the symbol of the other Sacrament, and then to call this a spiritual celebration of the Sacraments, was only taking a step further in the same direction.

In truth, the abolition of the Sacraments, by explaining away as figurative, words of our Lord which were undoubtedly understood by his hearers at the time literally; or, again, the literal interpretation of his words, "this is my body," which must have been understood at the time figuratively, (for the Apostles could not have supposed that at the Last Supper He was holding in his hands his own literal body;) or the addition of fresh Sacraments not instituted by Him or his Apostles: or a departure from the mode He appointed of celebrating the Eucharist, by the withholding of the cup,—all these, and any other similar liberties taken with Scripture, stand on the same ground, and are equally justifiable, or equally unjustifiable. If certain individuals, or Councils, or other Bodies of men, are really inspired messengers from Heaven, "moved by the Spirit" to declare with infallible certainty the Will of the Lord, then their words are to be received and obeyed with the same deference as those of Peter or Paul. And if they announce any change in the divine dispensations, or give any new interpretation of any part of Scripture, we are bound to acquiesce, even as the Jews were required to do in that great "mystery of the Gospel," the opening of the Kingdom of Heaven to Gentiles. It is God who speaks by their mouths; and he who has established any ordinance has evidently the power to abrogate or alter it.

And when persons who make such a claim (or admit it in their leaders) profess to take Scripture for their guide, they must be understood to mean that it is their guide only in the sense attached to it by the persons thus divinely-commissioned, and in those points only wherein no additional or different revelation has been made through these persons. When there has, the *later* revelation, of course, supersedes the earlier.

Nor does it make any real difference whether something be added to the Bible, claiming equal divine authority, or whether merely an alleged infallible *interpretation* be given of what is already written. For an interpretation coming from any Church or person divinely commissioned, and speaking "as the Spirit moveth," is of the same authority with Scripture itself, and must be implicitly received, however at variance with the sense which any ordinary reader would, of himself, attach to the words. And those who completely surrender their own judgment to any supposed infallible interpreter are, in fact, taking him—not Scripture—for their guide.

"It is most important,—when the expression is used of 'referring to Scripture as the infallible standard,' and requiring assent to such points of faith only as can be thence proved, to settle clearly, in the outset, the important question 'proved *to whom?*' If any man, or Body of men refer us to Scripture, as the sole authoritative standard, meaning that we are not to be called on to believe anything as a necessary point of faith, on their word, but only on *our own* conviction that it is scriptural, then, they place our faith on the basis, not of human authority, but of divine. But if they call on *us*, as a point of conscience, to receive whatever is proved to *their* satisfaction from Scripture, even though it may appear to *us* unscriptural, then, instead of releasing us from the usurped authority of Man taking the place of God, they are placing on us two burdens instead of one. 'You require us,' we might reply, 'to believe, first, that whatever you teach is *true;* and, secondly, besides this, to believe also, that it is a truth *contained in Scripture;* and we are to *take your word* for both[1]!'"

When, therefore, any such claim is set up, we are authorized and bound to require "the signs of an Apostle." Professed ambassadors from Heaven should be called on to show their *credentials*—the miraculous powers which alone can prove their inspiration—on pain of being convicted of profane presumption in daring to "say, thus saith the Lord, when the Lord hath not spoken."

Hence, there are probably many intelligent persons who do not

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[1] Essay on the *Kingdom of Christ*, pp. 211, 212.

really believe in the existence, in the present day, of inspiration, properly so called, though they continue to employ a language (derived from their predecessors) which implies it. I have adverted to this case in another work, from which I will take the liberty of extracting a passage :—

"It is well known, that there are sects and other parties of Christians, of whose system it forms a part, to believe in immediate, sensible inspiration—that the preachers are directly and perceptibly moved to speak by the Holy Spirit, and utter what He suggests. Now suppose any one, brought up in these principles, and originally perhaps a sincere believer in his own inspiration, becoming afterwards so far sobered, as to perceive, or strongly suspect, their delusiveness, and so to modify at least his views of the subject, as in fact to nullify all the *peculiarity* of the doctrine, which yet many of his hearers, he knows, hold in its full extent; must he not be strongly tempted to keep up what will probably seem to him so salutary a delusion? Such a case as this I cannot think to be even of rare occurrence. For, a man of sound judgment, and of a reflective turn, must, one would think, have it forced on his attention, that he speaks better after long *practice*, than when a novice—better on a subject he has been *used* to preach on, than on a comparatively new one — and better with *premeditation*, than on a sudden: and all this, as is plain both from the nature of the case, and from Scripture, is inconsistent with inspiration. Practice and study cannot improve the immediate suggestions of the Holy Ghost, and the Apostles were on that ground expressly forbidden to 'take thought beforehand what they should say, or to premeditate; because it should be *given them* in the same hour what they should say.' Again, he will perhaps see cause to alter his views of some passages of Scripture he may have referred to, or in other points to modify some of the opinions he may have expressed; and this again is inconsistent with the idea of inspiration, at least on *both* occasions.

"Yet with these views of his own preaching, as not really and properly inspired and infallible, he is convinced that he is inculcating the great and important truths of Christianity—that he is consequently, in a certain sense, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, from whom *all* good things must proceed—and that his preaching is of great benefit to his hearers; who yet would cease to attend to it, where he distinctly to declare to them his own real sentiments. In such a case, he must be very strongly tempted to commit the pious fraud of conniving at a belief which he does not himself sincerely hold; consoling perhaps his conscience with the reflection, that when he professes to be moved by the Spirit, he says what he is convinced is true, though *not true in the sense*

in which most of his hearers understand it;—not true in the sense which constitutes that very peculiarity of doctrine wherein perhaps originated the separation of his sect or party from other Christians[1]."

It is probable, however, that many persons deceive both others and themselves by confusing together in their minds differences of *degree*, and differences of *amount*[2]; and thence imagining (what a little calm reflection must show to be impossible, and, indeed, unintelligible) that there may be different *degrees* of what is properly and strictly termed INSPIRATION: that is, the *miraculous* influence under which we conceive anything that we call an inspired Work to have been written. The existence or non-existence of this inspiration is a question of *fact;* and though there may be different degrees of *evidence for* the existence of a fact, it is plain that one fact cannot be, itself, more or less a fact than another.

Inspiration may extend either to the very words uttered, or merely to the subject-matter of them, or merely to a certain portion of the matter;—to all, for instance, that pertains to *religious* truth, so as to afford a complete exemption from doctrinal error—though not, to matters of Geography, Natural Philosophy, &c. But in every case we understand that to whatever points the inspiration does extend, in these it secures *infallibility;* and infallibility manifestly cannot admit of *degrees.*

When we are speaking of the instructive, the eloquent, the entertaining, &c., we may call one discourse tolerably well-written, another rather better written, and a third better still. Each of them is what it is, in a different degree from the others. But we could not with propriety speak of one discourse as being "some-

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[1] *Errors of Romanism*, pp. 87, 88.

[2] The imperfection of modern languages conduces much to this confusion. In Greek, more and less in *quantity* are expressed by πλειον (or μειζον) and ελαττον; more and less in *degree*, by μαλλον and ηττον. To a beginner, Aristotle's remark, that though the category of ποιον ("of what quality") admits of degrees, that of ποσον ("how much") does not, is apt to appear paradoxical. In quantity five is less—a smaller number—than ten; but it is what it is—five—as much as the other is what it is—ten. On the other hand, a beautiful object, for instance, may be more beautiful than another; each of them being what it is in a different degree (μαλλον or ηττον) than the other. So also the quality of *being* rich admits of degrees. One man is richer than another rich man, if he possesses more in quantity of money than the other: but the *money itself* does not admit of degrees; since a penny is no less a penny than a pound is a pound. The Greeks would say, with that distinctness which their language enabled them to attain with ease, that το πλουτειν admits of degrees [μαλλον or ηττον], but that πλουτος does not.

what inspired," another, as "rather more inspired," and again, another, as a good deal inspired.

If any one is distinctly commissioned to deliver a message from Heaven, in any one instance, with infallible proof to himself and to others, that it is such, he is as truly inspired, and his revelation as much a revelation, as if he had had revealed to him a hundred times a greater *quantity* of superhuman knowledge. *That* one message is as much God's Word as any part of Scripture. Even so Paul, who "spoke with tongues more than all" the disciples he was addressing[1], had not *more* that miraculous gift (though he had the gift of *more* tongues) than any one of them who had been supernaturally taught a single foreign language.

If a man has ascertained, and can prove, that he has had, either in words, or merely in substance, a revelation of some doctrine, or again, an infallible divine assurance of safety from religious errors, he is to be listened to—in reference *to those points to which the inspiration extends*—as speaking with divine authority. But on the other hand, if he has no infallible proofs to give of having received a divine communication, then, though most or all of what he says may be, in fact, perfectly true, he has no right to use such an expression as "the Spirit moveth me to say so and so." He ought rather to say—what a pious and humble preacher must mean—I hope and trust that what I am setting forth is sound and useful doctrine; *and so far as it is* so, it must be the gift of Him "from whom all good things do proceed;" but *how far* it is so, both you and I must judge as well as we can, by a careful reference to Holy Scripture, with a full consciousness of our own fallibility.

Note D, p. 292.

"Concerning several points of this class,—such as the validity of lay-baptism, or of baptism by heretics or schismatics, &c., questions have been often raised, which have been involved in much unnecessary perplexity, from its being common to mix up together what are in fact *several distinct questions*, though relating to the *same subject*. For instance, in respect of the validity of Lay-baptism, three important and perfectly distinct questions may be raised; no one of which is answered by the answering either way, of the others: viz. 1st. What has a Church the *right* to determine as to this point? 2ndly. What is the *wisest* and best determination it can make? and 3rdly. What *has* this or that particular Church

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 18.

actually determined? Now persons who are agreed concerning the answer to one of these questions, may yet differ concerning the others; and *vice versâ*[1]."—*Kingdom of Christ*, Essay II. § 39, pp. 282, 283.

With respect to the first question (in reference to lay-baptism) it is plain that, according to the above principles, a Church has a right to admit, or refuse to admit, Members. This right it possesses as a *Society*. As a *christian* Society, sanctioned by our Heavenly Master, it has a right to administer his Sacraments; and it has a right to decide who shall or shall not exercise certain functions, and under what circumstances. If it permit Laymen (that is, those who are excluded from *other* spiritual functions) to baptize, it does, by that permission, *constitute* them its functionaries, in respect of that particular point. And this it has a right to do, or to refuse to do. If a Church refuse to recognise as valid any baptism not administered by such and such officers, then, the pretended administration of it by any one else, is of course null and void, as wanting that sanction of a christian Church, which alone can confer validity.

With respect to the second question, it does appear to me extremely unadvisable—derogatory to the dignity of the ordinance—and tending both to superstition and to profaneness, that the admission, through a divinely-instituted Rite, of members into the Society, should be in any case entrusted to persons not expressly chosen and solemnly appointed to any office in that Society.

Nearly similar reasoning will apply, I think, to the case of Ordinations. What appears to me the wisest course, would be that each Church should require a distinct appointment *by that Church* itself, to any ministerial office to be exercised therein; whether the person so appointed had been formerly ordained or not, to any such office in *another* Church. But the form of this appointment need not be such as to cast any stigma on a former Ordination, by implying that the person in question had *not* been a real and regular minister of *another* distinct Society. For any Church has a fair right to demand that (unless reason be shown to the contrary) its acts should be regarded as valid within the pale of that Church itself: but no Church can reasonably claim a right to ordain ministers for *another* Church.

As for the remaining question,—What is the actual determination as to this point,—*this* is of course a distinct question in reference to each Church.

On this point it is only necessary to remark how important it is,

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[1] See Appendix, Note O. Hooker, in his 5th Book, maintains at great length the validity of Baptism by laymen and women.

with a view to good order and peace, that *some* determination should be made, and should be clearly set forth, by any Church, as to this and other like practical questions; and that they should not be left in such a state of uncertainty as to furnish occasion for disputes and scruples[1]. Many points of *doctrine*, indeed, that may fairly be regarded as non-essential, it may be both allowable and wise for a Church to leave at large, and pronounce no decision on them; allowing each minister, if he thinks fit, to put forth his own exposition *as* the result of his own judgment, and not as a decision of the Church. But it is not so, in matters even intrinsically indifferent, where Church-*discipline* is concerned. A minister ought to be as seldom as possible left in the predicament of *not knowing what he ought to do* in a case that comes before him. And though it is too much to expect from a Church composed of fallible men that its decisions on every point should be such as to obtain universal *approbation* as the very best, it is but fair to require that it should at least *give* decisions, according to the best judgment of its Legislators, on points which, in each particular case that arises, *must* be decided in one way or another.

That so many points of this character should in our own Church be left in a doubtful state, is one out of the many evils resulting from the want of a Legislative Government for the Church: which for more than a century has had none[2], except the Civil Legislature; a Body as unwilling, as it is unfitted, to exercise any such functions. Such certainly was not the state of things designed or contemplated by our Reformers; and I cannot well understand the consistency of those who are perpetually eulogizing the Reformers, their principles and proceedings, and yet so completely run counter to them in a most fundamental point, as to endeavour to prevent, or not endeavour to promote, the Establishment of a Church-government; which no one can doubt *they* at least regarded as a thing essential to the well-being, "if not to the permanent existence, of a Church[3]." —*Kingdom of Christ*, App. (O), pp. 340—342.

In reference to this subject, I insert an extract from a letter from a very intelligent and well-informed pastor in France, relative to the decisions and practices of the Church of Rome.

I have only to add the remark, that if it had been definitively pronounced that baptism by heretics is totally invalid, the Church

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1 See *Appeal on behalf of Church-government* reprinted in Bishop Dickinson's *Remains*.

2 See *Case of Occasional Days and Prayers*, by John Johnson, A.M., Vicar of Cranbrook, in the Diocese of Canterbury.

3 See Speech on *presenting a Petition from the Diocese of Kildare*, with Appendix; reprinted in a volume of *Charges and other Tracts*.

of Rome could have claimed no *power* over them (any more than over Pagans or Mussulmans) as members, though rebellious members, of that Church. [See Note A. of this Appendix.]

"Les theologiens du concile de Trente, qui avaient étudié Aristote plus que l'évangile, signalerent 7 canaux de la grace divine; ce sont les 7 *sacraments*. Sur les 7, 6 sont conférés *exclusivement* par les prêtres. Un seul, le *baptême*, peut l'être par un main laïque; mais dans le cas de nécessité. Deplus, le baptême est administré *alors* avec de *l'eau bénite par les* prêtres. Chez nous la sage femme qui prévoit un accouchement laborieux, est obligée, par son serment, de porter avec elle *de l'eau bénite*. A peine l'enfant est il venu au jour qu'elle *l'ondoie* avec cette eau consacrée, et même si elle pense que l'enfant mourra avant de sortir du sein de la mère, elle introduit *l'eau bénite;* voila ce qu'une *sage femme* me racontait l'autre jour. D'où je conclus qu'en definitive, *tout* remonte au *prêtre Romain*.

"Quant à *la validité* du baptême des hérétiques, c'est une anomalie curieuse dans l'église Romaine. Les theologiens du concile se partagèrent sur la question de savoir si la *grace* du baptême procède ex *opere operato* ou ex *opere operantis*. Les cardinaux diplomates du concile, se rappelant qu'un pape avait décidé la *validité* du baptême célébré par les hérétiques, et ne voulant pas convenir qu'un pape s'était trompé, laissèrent la question indécisé, et firent décréter que les enfans des hérétiques ne seraient pas rebaptisés, pourvu que le baptême fût fait *suivant la formule consacrée, et les intentions de l'Eglise*. Alors, se fondant sur cette restriction, nos prêtres Français rebaptisent toujours ceux qu'ils convertissent à leur religion."

Note E, p. 292.

The solicitude of our Reformers on this point is manifested in their requiring Sponsors over and above the parents, (if any,) for an infant brought to baptism; and that the sponsors should be of mature age, and *communicants*. [See Canons.] They permitted, indeed, that, in cases of necessity, the Rite should be administered without sponsors; but no candid person can doubt that they always contemplated the application for baptism being made by *some* one who should be understood as engaging for the christian education of the child.

I am aware that it is often difficult, and sometimes impossible, to enforce rigidly the directions of our Church respecting sponsors; but ministers are bound to do their *best* towards complying with those directions, and in every way to guard against the thoughtless carelessness and the irregularities which are so apt to find their

way into the administration of this holy Ordinance. One may too often see evinced, in the way in which, by many, the one sacrament is blindly shunned, and the other, as blindly sought, a similar superstition and ignorance.

How much of ignorance and misconception, and of consequent superstition and profaneness, prevails on this subject, you must be but too well aware. One instance would alone suffice to show this—the shocking profanation so often exhibited—the "*christening*," as it is called, of a newly-built ship; a ceremony commonly attended and sanctioned by (so called) educated persons; who would not, it must be hoped, but through gross ignorance and thoughtlessness, take a part in a *solemn mockery* of one of Christ's Sacraments.

In reference to another point connected with the same subject, I subjoin an extract from an Address to the Clergy of the Diocese, written in 1846:—

"Some cases of irregularity having come under my notice, originating, I have no doubt, in inadvertence, it seems to me not improbable that other instances also, of a like inadvertence, may have occurred, that have not come to my knowledge.

"I have accordingly judged it best not to delay noticing this matter till the Visitation, but to bring it before you, *at once*, and in a *general* way; as I would always rather prevent, than censure, any irregularity.

"I find that in some instances a practice has grown up of baptizing in private houses, administering the rite *according to the order for Public Baptism;* and accordingly many of the infants thus baptized are, I apprehend, never publickly presented at all to be received into the Congregation, in the parish-church. And this has been done, I have reason to fear, even in some cases in which the Rubric does not contemplate any private baptism at all; merely in compliance with the fancy of the parents to convert into a mere domestic ceremony what ought to be treated as a Church-Sacrament. If such a misapprehension be blameable in any lay-member of the Church, the encouragement of it must be much more censurable in a minister whose business is to instruct those committed to his charge, and to correct any errors they may fall into.

"If you will put before your people the directions contained in the Prayer Book, they will readily understand that you are bound never to administer baptism at all in a private house, except in a *bonâ fide* and duly certified case of pressing danger; and that, when such a case does occur, you are bound to proceed according to the directions so precisely and plainly given in the Rubric.

"Other disadvantages likely to result from irregularity in this matter, such as the danger of a total omission of *registration*, I do not advert to at present, because it is sufficient to have pointed out

what is, independently of all such considerations, the clear duty of a minister of our Church."

NOTE F, p. 294.

"I WOULD wish," remarks Bp. Ryder, "generally to restrict the term (regeneration) to the baptismal privileges; and considering them as comprehending not only an external admission into the visible Church, not only a covenanted title to the pardon and grace of the Gospel, but even a degree of spiritual aid vouchsafed, and ready to offer itself to our acceptance or rejection at the dawn of reason. I would recommend a reference to these privileges in our discourses, as talents which the hearer should have so improved as to bear interest; as seed which should have sprung up and produced fruit.

"But at the same time I would solemnly protest against that most serious error (which has arisen probably from exalting too highly the just view of baptismal regeneration) of contemplating all the members of a baptized congregation as *converted*,—as having, all, once known the truth, and entered upon the right path, though some may have wandered from it, and others may have made little progress,—as not therefore requiring (what all by nature, and most it is to be feared through defective principle and practice, require) that 'transformation by the renewing of the mind;'—that 'putting off the old man, and putting on the new man,' which is so emphatically enjoined by St. Paul to his baptized Romans and Ephesians."—*Extract from Bishop Ryder's (of Lichfield) Primary Charge to his Clergy.*

"In the baptismal Service," says the late Mr. Simeon, "*we thank God for having regenerated the baptized infant by His Holy Spirit.* Now from hence it appears that, *in the opinion of our Reformers, regeneration and remission of sins did accompany baptism.* But in what sense did they hold this sentiment? Did they maintain that there was no need for the seed then sown in the heart of the baptized person to grow up and to bring forth fruit; or that he could be saved in any other way than by a progressive renovation of his soul after the divine image? Had they asserted any such doctrine as that, it would have been impossible for any enlightened person to concur with them. But nothing can be conceived more repugnant to their sentiments than such an idea as this: so far from harbouring such a thought, they have, and that too in this very prayer, taught us to look to God for that total change both of heart and life which, *long since their days, has begun to be expressed* by the term 'regeneration.' *After*

thanking God for regenerating the infant by His Holy Spirit, we are taught to pray 'that he being dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin;' and then, declaring the total change to be the necessary mean of his obtaining salvation, we add, 'so that finally, with the residue of thy holy Church, he *may* be an inheritor of thine everlasting kingdom.' Is there (I would ask) any person that can require more than this? Or does God in his word require more? There are two things to be noticed in reference to this subject, the *term* 'regeneration' and the *thing*. The term occurs but twice in the Scriptures: in one place it refers to baptism, and is distinguished from the renewing of the Holy Ghost, *which, however, is represented as attendant on it;* and in the other place it has a totally distinct meaning unconnected with the subject. Now the *term* they use as the *Scripture* uses it, and the thing they require as strongly as any person can require it. They do not give us any reason to imagine that an adult person can be saved without experiencing all that *modern* divines [*Ultra-Protestant divines*] have included in the term 'regeneration:' on the contrary, they do both there and in the liturgy insist upon a radical change of both heart and life. Here, then, the only question is, *not* 'Whether a baptized person can be saved by that ordinance without sanctification,' but whether God does always accompany the sign with the thing signified? Here is certainly room for difference of opinion, *but it cannot be positively decided in the negative*, because we cannot know, or even judge, respecting it in any case whatever, except by the fruits that follow; and, therefore, in all fairness, it may be considered only as a doubtful point; and if he appeal, as he ought to do, to the holy Scripture, they certainly do in *a very remarkable way accord with the expressions in our liturgy.* St. Paul says, 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles—whether we be bond or free—and have been all made to *drink into* one Spirit.' And this he says of all the visible members of Christ's body, (1 Cor. xii. 13, 27.) Again, speaking of the whole nation of Israel, infants, as well as adults, he says, 'They were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and *that rock was Christ*,' (1 Cor. x. 1, 4.) Yet, behold, in the very next verse he tells us that, 'with many of them God was displeased, and overthrew them in the wilderness.' In another place he speaks yet more strongly still: 'As many of you (says he) as are baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' Here we see what is meant by the expression, 'baptized into Christ;' it is precisely the same expression as that before mentioned of the Israelites being

'baptized unto Moses;' the preposition, εἰς, is used in both places; it includes all that had been initiated into his religion by the rite of baptism; and of them, universally, does the Apostle say, '*They have put on Christ.*' Now, I ask, have not the persons who scruple the use of that prayer in the baptismal service equal reason to scruple the use of these different expressions?

"Again, St. Peter says, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you *for the remission of sins.*' (Acts ii. 38, 39.) And in another place, 'Baptism doth now save us.' (1 Pet. iii. 21.) And speaking elsewhere of baptized persons who were unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, he says, '*He hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*' (2 Pet. i. 9.) *Does not this very strongly countenance the* IDEA WHICH OUR REFORMERS ENTERTAINED, THAT THE REMISSION OF OUR SINS, AND THE REGENERATION OF OUR SOULS, IS ATTENDANT ON THE BAPTISMAL RITE? Perhaps it will be said that the inspired writers spake of persons who had been baptized at an adult age. But if they did so in some places, they certainly did not in others; and where they did not, they must be understood as comprehending all, whether infants or adults; and therefore the language of our liturgy, which is not a whit stronger than theirs, may be both subscribed and used without any just occasion of offence.

"Let me then speak the truth before God: though I am no Arminian, *I do think the refinements of Calvin have done great harm in the Church:* they have driven *multitudes from the plain and popular way of speaking used by the inspired writers*, and have made them unreasonably and unscripturally squeamish in their modes of expression; and I conceive that the less addicted any person is to systematic accuracy, the more he will accord with the inspired writers, and the more he will approve the views of our reformers. I do not mean, however, to say that a slight alteration in two or three instances would not be an improvement, since it would take off a *burthen* from many minds, and supersede the necessity of laboured explanations; but I do mean to say that there is no such objection to these expressions as to deter any conscientious person from giving his unfeigned assent and consent to the liturgy altogether, or from using the particular expressions which we have been endeavouring to explain."—*Simeon's Works*, vol. ii. p. 259.

"In the case of infant baptism," says Archbishop Sumner, "there are evidently no similar means of ascertaining the actual disposition. The benefit received is strictly gratuitous, or 'of free grace.' It is promised, however, to faith and obedience, presupposed in the recipient, and pledged in his name by the sponsors: whence it follows that the blessing attached to the

sacrament must fail, if the conditions fail in those who are capable of performing them: and that the faith and obedience must become actual and personal in those who arrive at mature age. It has not altered the nature of Christianity, that its external privileges are become national. Whoever, therefore, professes the hope of the Gospel, must individually embrace the doctrine of the Gospel: must consent as sincerely as the earliest converts, to refer whatever he does in word or deed to the glory of God: with the primitive humility of the Apostles must renounce all confidence in his own strength, and must look for salvation through Christ's death, with as much personal gratitude as if Christ had suffered for him alone. Though in many cases it may be impossible, as was formerly acknowledged, for those who have been placed in covenant with God by baptism, to state at what time and by what process the truths of the Gospel became an active principle in the mind, still it is undeniable that in all who attain the age of reason they must become so, or the covenant is made void: and it is a definite and intelligible question whether they have actually taken this hold, or no. How the tree was nourished and invigorated, and enabled to sustain the inclement seasons which opposed its early growth and strength, we may in vain inquire; but whether it bears fruit or not, and whether that fruit gives evidence of a sound stock, any one may examine either as to himself or others. Is the heart possessed of a sincere conviction of its own sinfulness and need of a Saviour: does it manifest its dependence on the Holy Spirit by an habitual intercourse with God through prayer: does it feel a practical sense of the great business of this life as a probation, and preparation for eternity? These are infallible characters of faith: and though they will be found in different degrees in different individuals, no one should be satisfied with himself, and no one should suffer his congregation to be satisfied, till he can trace these characters in the heart.

"But if such a frame of mind is indispensable to a Christian's reasonable hope, it is evident that a preacher can in no wise take it for granted that it exists in his hearers as the necessary and certain consequence of baptism; but must require of all who have the privilege of baptism, that they strive to attain it; that, being *regenerate* in condition, they be also *renewed* in nature: and constantly examine themselves whether they have this proof within them, that they are born of the *Spirit* as well as of *water*, and can make the 'answer of a good conscience towards God.'"—*Sumner's Apostolical Preaching*, ch. vii.

It is not, however, by those only who *approve* of the doctrine which I have attributed to our Reformers, that this interpretation of their words is adopted. Several persons also who *disapprove* it,

both Dissenters and (what is very remarkable) Churchmen, concur in adopting an interpretation substantially the same.

As for the former of these — the Dissenters — their testimony will, I suppose, be considered as of the less weight in proportion as they may be suspected of being unconsciously biassed by a wish to alienate others from a Church to which they do not themselves belong. But the reverse is the case with those who are members, and even ministers, of our Church; since *their* bias, if any, must be on the opposite side.

Now there is a case recorded of a beneficed clergyman who, not many years ago, felt it his duty to print and circulate among his parishioners tracts censuring the Formularies of the Church on the very ground of their inculcating the doctrine in question. For this procedure he was tried in an Ecclesiastical Court, and sentenced to suspension.

Some of his parishioners endeavoured thereupon to raise a subscription for him; and with that view put forth a printed circular (of which a copy was sent to me), representing him as a martyr suffering persecution for conscience-sake. And there might have been some ground for this representation, if he had *voluntarily resigned* the endowments of a Church which he regarded as fundamentally unsound, instead of retaining them as long as he was permitted to do so.

The system of morality—whatever it was — by which he reconciled this to his conscience, seems to have been adopted by a portion at least of his flock.

But at any rate, he could have had no conceivable bias towards an interpretation of the Formularies of his Church which would make them at variance with his own teaching.

Note G, page 299.

"All persons ought to receive the holy Communion of the Lord's Supper on the very first opportunity after being confirmed. Our Church directs that 'no one shall be admitted to the Communion except one who has been confirmed, or is ready and is desirous to be confirmed;' and again, that 'ALL PERSONS' (that is, of course, all who are not too young or too ignorant for Confirmation) 'shall receive the Communion at least three times a year.' From this it is plain that though such as have not been confirmed, may, if they are prepared and willing to be so, attend without any scruple, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; on the other hand, no one, who *has* been confirmed, ought to delay receiving that Sacra-

ment. The Catechism also, designed for the instruction of children before Confirmation, proves the same thing: since it contains an explanation of the *two* Sacraments.

"Some persons entertain a groundless notion, that a child, who is fit for Confirmation, may yet be too young to receive the Communion: and many, it is to be feared, for this and for other reasons, go on from Sunday to Sunday, and from year to year, putting off this duty, in expectation of becoming more *fit* for it; when it is likely that they are becoming every day *less* fit, and are falling into a careless and irreligious state of mind.

"But if you will consider the matter carefully, you will see that our Church is quite right in determining that all, who have been confirmed, should receive the Lord's Supper without delay. For all of them, it is to be hoped, understand and rightly reflect on the one Sacrament—that of Baptism; if they do not, the ceremony of Confirmation is a mere empty mockery: and if they do, they are capable of sufficiently understanding and valuing the other Sacrament also: and in that case, they ought not to delay receiving it.

"Accordingly provision has been made to prevent any such delay, by celebrating the Lord's Supper in each Church *immediately after the Confirmation:* and all the young persons who shall have been confirmed, will be expected to attend.

"'To day therefore, if ye will hear God's voice, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin,'—accept his gracious offer; and continue from this time forth to be a regular attendant at his Holy Table.

"CONFIRMATION HYMN.

"LORD, shall thy children come to Thee?
A boon of love divine we seek;
Brought to thine arms in infancy,
Ere heart could feel, or tongue could speak,
Thy children pray for grace that they
May come themselves to Thee this day.

"LORD, shall we come? and come again,
Oft as we see yon table spread,
And—tokens of thy dying pain—
The wine pour'd out, the broken bread;
Bless, bless, O LORD, thy children's prayer,
That they may come and find Thee there!

"LORD, shall we come, not thus alone,
At holy time, or solemn rite,

But every hour till life be flown,
In weal or woe, in gloom or light;
Come to thy throne of grace, that we
In Faith, Hope, Love, confirm'd may be?

"LORD, shall we come—come yet again:—
Thy children ask one blessing more:—
To come not now alone, but then,
When life, and death, and time are o'er
Then, then to come, O LORD, and be
Confirm'd in heav'n, confirm'd by Thee."

NOTE H, page 300.

As for the particular contest I have now been alluding to, I shall abstain from entering on any discussion of the merits of the decisions which have been pronounced, further than to remark upon one misconception of them which I have observed to be not a little prevalent. The recent sentence, which has attracted so much public attention, was not, as several persons seem to have apprehended, a decision as to the soundness or unsoundness of such and such views of a scripture-doctrine, but on a very different question. That question was, whether the maintainers of a certain tenet are, as such, *excluded from holding office* in our Church;—whether our Formularies are so distinct and decisive on the point, as in fact to *excommunicate* all who hold that tenet. And the decision actually given—*be it a right or a wrong one*—is one which might conceivably have been given (without any just imputation of inconsistency) by judges who did not themselves entertain such views.

Thus much, at least, is what no one, I conceive, will, on reflection, at all doubt: that if the opinions of the contending parties had been *reversed*, and a candidate for Institution had been rejected on the ground of his *not* holding the doctrines which were recently objected to as heterodox, the decision would have been, at least as promptly as in the present case, given in his favour. For it ought to be remembered, that in the case of any *penal* enactment, the established rule is, to incline always (where any doubt exists) towards the most lenient interpretation. And exclusion from a Benefice is evidently of the character of a penalty.

As for the degree of latitude that is to be allowed in the interpretation of the Articles and Formularies of a Church, it would be manifestly impossible to lay down any general rule that would be a sufficient guide in all particular cases. But every one must admit, I conceive, that there is a just medium which should be aimed at

(however men may differ in fixing that medium in each individual instance) between excessive strictness and excessive laxity. For, on the one hand, if each of us should insist on excluding from church-membership all who did not fully coincide with himself in the precise interpretation of every passage in our Formularies, and in every inference which appeared to him fairly deducible from such interpretation, it can hardly be doubted that the result would be a virtual division of the Church into several different Churches, mutually excommunicating each other. And yet it is no less evident, on the other hand, that if, through dread of such a result, we should adopt the principle, that every one is to be at liberty to assign to our Formularies whatever meaning he may think fit, interpreting them in any "non-natural" sense that may suit his own views, no form of religion, or of irreligion—atheism not excepted—would be excluded[1]. Our Church would be ONE in nothing but in name; and language would have completely failed of the very object for which language exists—to convey an intelligible sense.

Recently, however, we have witnessed the strange spectacle of professed members, and beneficed ministers, of our Church, openly maintaining transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the Mass; or, at least, what comes so near to these doctrines, that, of plain men unversed in scholastic subtilities, not one in a hundred could perceive the difference. And others again, while professing to disapprove of such teaching, yet regard it as not going beyond the allowable latitude conceded to members of our Church; though the doctrines are what our Reformers risked, and some of them sacrificed, their lives, in opposing; and which they sedulously guarded against not only in the Articles, but also in the Rubric, in which they declare that "our Lord's body is in Heaven, AND NOT HERE." Strange, again, it is, and lamentable, that persons should be found, even among the members of our own Church, who, while vehemently opposing the doctrines in question, labour to fix on our Church the imputation of favouring those views, on the ground of our Reformers having used language borrowed from that of our Lord Himself: "my flesh is meat indeed," &c. If, in the expressions of our Reformers, the word "indeed" is to be understood to signify "literally and corporeally," the same word in our Lord's expression must be understood so too: and thus these opponents of Transubstantiation labour to array against themselves both the language of our Formularies, and that of Scripture itself.

The medium between the opposite extremes we must expect

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[1] As this may perhaps appear to some of my readers an exaggerated statement, I have subjoined in Note K, some remarks in confirmation of it, extracted from works published several years ago.

to find, in practice, placed somewhat differently by different persons. But thus much, at least, may in fairness be required of all—that whatever degree of strictness, or of laxity, of interpretation, each person may deem right, he should allow as right for *all* men alike; and that he should not have one rule for himself, and those who agree with him, and another rule for such as may think differently.

Self-evident as is the justice of this maxim, no one will think the mention of it superfluous who considers how widely it has been departed from by many persons of opposite parties. One may hear the most vehement and indignant censures pronounced, and that from both sides, on such as put a forced and unnatural interpretation on the language of such and such portions of our Formularies, while the complainants themselves are no less boldly explaining away the language of certain other portions into a conformity with their own views[1].

Whatever allowance may be made for sincere errors of judgment, one cannot but regard those as self-condemned who adopt without scruple, in their own favour, a mode of procedure which, in their opponents, they loudly condemn as disingenuous.

Note I, page 300.

I have seen reproaches full of scornful exultation cast on Protestants for having recourse, when treating of the subject of Church-government, to reasonings drawn from general views of Human Nature, and to illustrations from secular affairs: and for calculating what are likely to be the decisions of a Synod so and so constituted, without adverting to the promises of divine presence and protection to the Church, and without expressing confidence of providential interpositions to secure it from discord, error, and other evils.

This kind of language has, at the first glance, a plausible air; and is well calculated,—one cannot but think, designed,—to impose

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[1] One among many instances that might be given of this kind of unfairness, is, the conduct of some persons who, at public meetings, and in various other ways, have been protesting against the disingenuousness of those, who depart from the plain sense of our Formularies, though they not only never expressed any disapprobation of the celebrated Tract 90, and other such publications, but even (some of them) protested publicly against the condemnation of these by the University of Oxford! I have subjoined in Note L, a few extracts from that Tract, as it may perhaps not be in the hands of some of my readers.

on pious and well-intentioned, but ignorant, weak, and unreflecting minds among the multitude. But a sober examination will show it to be either wholly irrelevant to the matter in hand, or else a mere groundless pretence.

It is indeed true that the Lord has promised to be with his People "even unto the end of the world," and that "the Gates of Hell" (*i.e.*, Death) "shall not prevail against his Church;" that is, that Christianity shall never become extinct. And his "Spirit which helpeth our infirmities" will doubtless be granted to such as sincerely exert themselves in his cause: though not necessarily so as to crown those exertions with such complete success, as, we know, was not granted to the Apostles themselves. Our efforts, however, in that cause, whether He in his unsearchable wisdom shall see fit to make them a greater or a less benefit to others, will doubtless, as far as regards ourselves, be accepted by Him. And a pious confidence in whatever God has really promised, Protestants do not fail to inculcate on suitable occasions.

But when the question is as to the probable results of such and such a procedure in a Synod, and as to the measures likely to be adopted by a Government so and so constituted, it would manifestly be irrelevant to dwell on those general promises of the divine blessing. If there were a question what means should be used to protect a certain district from hurtful inundations, no one would think of cutting short the discussion by a reference to the promise made to Noah, that the whole Earth should never again be laid waste by a deluge. It is evident, therefore, that the reproaches I have alluded to must be understood as having reference to (that which alone is pertinent to the present question) confidence in a promise of supernatural interference to secure the Church for ever from strife, schism, and corruption.

And certainly if we *had* received any such promise, all apprehensions, all calculations of probabilities,—all reasonings from the analogy of other human transactions, would be superseded; and we should have only to "stand still and see the salvation of God."

But every one, except the grossly ignorant and unthinking, must be well aware that no such promise has ever been *fulfilled*, and consequently (if the Scriptures are to be taken as a record of divine truth) that none such was ever *made*.

We find the Apostle Paul declaring that "there must needs be heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest;" we find him labouring to repress the irregularities and party-spirit, which even in his own time had crept into the Church of Corinth; and warning the Elders of Ephesus and Miletus to "take heed, because after his departure grievous wolves would enter into the fold." Corruptions in doctrine, disorders, dissension, and insubordination,

are evils of which he is continually giving notice to his People as what they must be prepared to encounter.

And when we look to the ecclesiastical history of subsequent Ages,—exhibiting the sad spectacle of contests, almost equally dividing the Church, between the Arians, for instance, and the Athanasians, on points of doctrine, and between the Donatists and their opponents, on a question of Ecclesiastical Polity,—besides the mutual anathemas of the Eastern and Western Churches, and besides all the cabals and intrigues, and secular motives, and evil passions, which have notoriously found their way into Councils, and Conclaves, and ecclesiastical Courts—when we contemplate all this, we see but too well what reason the Apostle had for his warnings.

But there is no need in the present case to resort to ancient history. The very existence of *Protestants* (to say nothing of the Greek Church) is sufficient to nullify, in respect of the Church of Rome at least, the notion of an exemption from error and from schism being promised to *that*, as to the Universal or Catholic Church. For, the Church of Rome claims all professing Christians as properly belonging to it; considering Protestants as children, though disobedient children;—subjects, though revolted subjects. The very rise, therefore, and continued existence, of Protestantism, proves the non-existence in the Catholic Church (if the Church of Rome be supposed such) of any immunity from heresy and schism. And if it be attempted to avoid this conclusion by allowing that Protestants and members of the Greek Church are *not* to be regarded as in any way belonging to the Church of Rome, then the pretensions of that Church to be *the Catholic* (*i. e.* Universal) Church, must be given up.

Whatever plausibility therefore there may appear at first sight in the pretensions, *separately* taken, of that Church, on the one hand to perfect purity of doctrine, and Unity, and on the other hand to Universality, it is evident that both *conjointly* cannot be maintained with even any show of reason. Either the one or the other must be abandoned. Like the pictures of a Thaumatrope, the two will be found, on careful and steady observation, to be painted on *opposite sides;* and it is only by a confused whirl that they can be made to appear in conjunction. If Protestants, and members of the Greek, the Armenian, and other Churches, do *not* belong to the Romish Church, it cannot be *Universal;* if (which is what its advocates actually maintain) all Christians do belong to it, then, it manifestly is not exempt from *divisions*, and contrariety of doctrine. It is in vain (as far as the present question is concerned) to urge that the doctrine and procedure of Protestants, &c., are *condemned* by the authorities of the Church of Rome, and by all its *sound* mem-

bers. For, an *exemption* from a certain evil must consist, not in its being *censured* when it arises, but in its *not arising* at all. Indeed it would be very easy,—and also quite nugatory,—for any Church whatever to set up the boast that its doctrines are received by all,—except those who dissent from them; and that all submit to its authority,—except those who refuse submission.

So also, the most insignificant State existing might pretend to *Universal Empire*. It is said that it is, or was, the custom for the Kham of Tartary, every day, as soon as he has dined, to send out a herald to his tent-door to make proclamation in a loud voice, that all the kings of the earth are now at liberty to go to dinner. This may be considered as putting forth a claim to universal supremacy: but it would hardly be regarded as *establishing* the claim.

And as for exemption from error and dissension, let any one but consider what would be thought if an Englishman were to boast to a Hindoo or a Chinese, that London enjoys the happiness of being exempt from all crimes, and also from conflagrations; and should afterwards explain his meaning to be, that all crimes are forbidden by law; the perpetrator being liable, when detected and apprehended, to be punished as the law directs; and that though fires do break out from time to time, there are fire-engines ready to be called out on such occasions. Every one would at once perceive that all this does not amount to what can be properly termed an exemption.

The extraordinary Providence, therefore, which is boasted of as securing the true Church from division and from error, and which Protestants are reproached with not trusting to or claiming, has evidently no existence in the very Church to which those who utter the reproach belong. And one can hardly doubt that they must themselves be aware of this; and that when they speak, in a tone of exulting confidence, of the miraculous exemption of their Church from the inroads of false doctrine and dissension, they are only seeking to quiet the minds of the unthinking Vulgar with a delusive consolation.

How far this kind of language may work an opposite effect on the minds of the more educated Classes,—how far the great prevalence of infidelity among those Classes on the Continent may be accounted for by their continually hearing (from those who, they will conclude, ought to know what their own Scriptures say) of *promises* having been made to the Church which, it is evident, as a matter of experience, have *not* been fulfilled,—is an inquiry into which I will not now enter. My own conviction is, that every kind of pious fraud is as much at variance, ultimately, with sound policy, as it is with christian principle.

I am well aware that when the two claims,—that to universality, and that to exemption from dissension and from error,—are brought forward *in conjunction*, and it is undertaken to reconcile them with each other, it is usual to explain one or both of them in a sense different from the obvious and natural meaning of the words, so as to render the two claims compatible. Then it is that we are told that "Catholic" or "Universal" means only the religion of a considerable *majority* of professing Christians, or the religion the most *widely diffused* throughout Christendom: or we are told that the Universal Church means merely that which all professed Christians *ought* to belong to; and that adults of sound mind who have received christian baptism, and deliberately profess Christianity, are *not*, necessarily, members of the Universal Church, or Christians at all.

And we are also told that exemption from dissension and from error belongs to those only who *submit* in all points to the decisions of the rulers of the Catholic Church. And doubtless, if all mankind, or any number of men, would but come to a perfect agreement in *any* one religion,—be it *true or false*,—they could not but be exempt from religious dissension, and, if not from error, at least from anything that they themselves would account an error.

But surely this is to "keep the word of promise to the ear, and break it to the hope." It is not in any such sense that the pretensions I have been speaking of are usually put forth, and naturally understood, when *taken separately*. And it is not under any such explanations as the above, that those pretensions are found so alluring and so satisfactory as, to a great number of persons, they are; but in the natural and ordinary sense of the words. The expression "Catholic," or "Universal," Church is naturally understood to denote that which comprehends *all* Christians. And by the word Christians is understood those who acknowledge and professedly embrace the religion founded by Jesus Christ. And those who designate any of these as Heretics are so far from denying them the title of Christians (though unsound and perverted Christians), that they imply it; since Pagans or avowed Atheists are never reckoned Heretics.

I am not, be it observed, defending this use of the word "Christian" as the most *advisable* to be adopted, if we were framing a new language. It might, we will suppose, have been advisable so to define the term that no two Christian Sects or Churches should apply it to the same persons. I am simply stating a *fact* as to the actual sense conveyed by the word in our *existing language*. And that such is the sense conveyed by it, is as much a fact as that we actually call the ninth month of the year, September, and the tenth,

October; though if we were remodelling our language, the impropriety of such names would be obvious.

And again, exemption from dissension and from error naturally conveys the idea, not of these evils being *condemned* by certain Authorities when they arise, but of their never arising at all.

And it is in these obvious and natural senses of the words that the above pretensions are, in general,—when taken separately,—put forth with boastful confidence, and prove so attractive and so consolatory to the minds of many, as to be at once admitted without any close scrutiny as to how far they are well founded.

But when the two claims are brought into juxta-position, and it is inquired how far they are *compatible*, then they are explained away in the manner above alluded to. The promise is made in one sense, and kept in the other. If King George III. and his predecessors had boasted that the *English language* was in use in all their European dominions, and also that they were *Kings of France*, every one would have seen, that, whatever might be said for each of these claims separately, they were incompatible with each other.

Waiving, however, all reference to those who reject the supremacy of Rome, the differences that have occurred—and that have been permitted—among those who do acknowledge it, are such that one cannot but wonder at the boldness with which the claim is put forward of a miraculous exemption from everything of the kind. The long and violent disputes indeed between Franciscans and Dominicans about the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception," or those between the Jesuits and the Jansenists as to sundry important points of faith,—these, the unlearned multitude, in many countries, may have never heard of. But they must surely have heard of books deliberately sanctioned and recommended for the use of schools, by *Prelates of the highest rank*, and moreover approved by the Pope himself, being denounced by other Prelates of the same Church, as not only dangerous, but full of unsound doctrine.

In the face of all this, to boast of unbroken peace and concord is surely a large demand on popular credulity.

Note K, page 323.

"This disingenuous system is a tree which has, of late, borne fruits that have startled many, even of those who could not see, when first pointed out to them, the natural tendency of the system. The fundamental doctrines of our Reformers have been explained

away by interpreting their words in a non-natural sense, so as to allow members of our Church to hold tenets the most opposite. Now, how can any one be sure that the application of the principle is arbitrarily stopped short at this point? Let any one examine and compare together, *these non-natural interpretations*, and the language, *in reference to Christianity*, of the foreign *Transcendentalists;* who profess to believe that Christianity came from God,—in the same sense in which *every thing* comes from God;—who teach the Incarnation,—explaining to the initiated that this means the presence of the Deity, *i.e.*, of the 'spiritual principle' which pervades the universe—the God of Pantheism—in *Man, generally*, as well as in *all other* animals; and who profess a belief in Man's immortality,—that is, that the *human species* will never become extinct, &c. Let any one, I say, compare together these two systems, (if indeed they are to be reckoned as *two*,) and say whether there is ANY GREATER VIOLENCE DONE TO THE ORDINARY SENSE OF WORDS BY THE ONE THAN BY THE OTHER;—whether he who professes himself a *churchman* according to the one system, may not, with perfect consistency, profess himself a *Christian* according to the other. Even supposing therefore that all the disciples of the School in question do inwardly believe in the truth of Christianity, they cannot give any sufficient assurance that they do so."—*Introd. to Essays on Peculiarities*, 5th ed., pp. 8, 9.

"It might be added that, among those who express the greatest dread and detestation of 'German Neology,'—'German Philosophy,'—the 'daring speculations of the Germans,' &c., are to be found some of that class of Anglican Divines, whose doctrines apparently correspond the most closely (as far as we can judge respecting two confessedly mystic schools) with those of that very Neology. The very circumstance itself that both *are* schools of Mysticism,—that both parties have one system for the mass of mankind, and another—whether expressed in different language, or in the same words understood in a totally different sense—for the initiated, affords a presumption, when there are some points of coincidence in the doctrine *divulged*, that a still further agreement may be expected in the *reserved* doctrines.

"As the advocates of reserve among us speak of not intending to inculcate generally such conclusions as a logical reasoner will correctly deduce by following out their principles, and again, speak of an ordinary reader being likely to 'miss their real meaning by not being aware of the *peculiar sense* in which they employ terms,' so, those German Transcendentalists whom I allude to,—whose system of Theology—or rather of Atheology—is little else than a new edition of the Pantheism of the ancient Heathen Philosophers, of the Brahmins, and the Buddhists,—use a similar double-

meaning language. They profess Christianity, and employ profusely such terms as a 'God,' 'Faith,' 'Incarnation,' 'Miracle,' 'Immortality,' &c., attaching to these words, a meaning quite remote from what is commonly understood by them. Their 'God' is the God of Pantheism; not a personal agent, but a certain vital principle diffused through the Material Universe, and of which every human soul is a portion; which is at death to be reabsorbed into the infinite Spirit, and become just what it was before birth[1], exactly according to the ancient system of philosophy described by Virgil: 'Mens agitat molem et toto se corpore miscet; Inde hominum pecudumque genus,' &c. And the other terms alluded to are understood by them in a sense no less wide from the popular acceptation.

"Both parties again, agree in deprecating all employment of reasoning in matters pertaining to religion: both decry the historical evidence of Christianity, and discourage as profane, all appeal to evidence; and both disparage Miracles considered as a proof of the divine origin of Christianity; alleging that *every* event that occurs is equally a miracle; meaning therefore exactly what in ordinary language would be expressed by saying that *nothing* is miraculous.

"Other coincidences may be observed; such as the strong desire manifested by both parties to explain away, or soften down the line of demarcation between what ordinary Christians call the *Scriptures*, and everything subsequent;—between what *we* call the christian Revelation, considered as an historical transaction recorded in the New Testament; and any pretended after-revelation, or improvement, or completion, or perfect development, of 'the system of true Religion.' To Christianity *as a revelation completed* in our sacred *books*, both parties, more or less openly, according to circumstances, confess their objection.

"And it is remarkable that even the vehement censures pronounced by one of these schools, on the speculations of the other, is far from being inconsistent with their fundamental agreement in principles. For, of the German Neologists themselves, some of the leading writers strongly condemn the rashness with which some conclusions have been openly stated by others, of the same school, and confessedly proceeding on principles fundamentally the same[2].

"If any one therefore who belongs to a school of mystical reserve, should be suspected, in consequence of a remarkable agreement between some of his acknowledged tenets and the German Neology,

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[1] See Essay I. (First Series.)

[2] See Dr. West's Discourse on *Reserve*.

of a further degree of secret concurrence, beyond, perhaps, what he is really conscious of, he must not wonder at, or complain of such suspicion; nor expect at once to repel it by the strongest censure of those writers, and professed renunciation of their doctrines; unless he can also make up his mind to renounce likewise the system of a 'Double doctrine' altogether, resolving, and proclaiming his resolution, to speak henceforth 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,' respecting his religious tenets, and forswearing totally the practice of employing language 'in a peculiar sense' different from what is ordinarily understood by it."—*Kingdom of Christ, Appendix, Note P.*

NOTE L, page 324.

"IT may be objected that the tenor of the above explanations is anti-Protestant, whereas it is notorious that the Articles were drawn up by Protestants, and intended for the establishment of Protestantism; accordingly, that it is an evasion of their meaning to give them any other than a protestant-drift, possible as it may be to do so grammatically, and in each separate part. * * * *

"But I. It is a duty we owe both to the Catholic Church and to our own, to take our reformed Confessions in the most catholic sense they will admit. * * * *

"V. The Articles are evidently framed on the principle of leaving open large questions, on which the controversy hinges. They state broadly extreme truths, and are silent about their adjustment. For instance, they say that all necessary faith must be proved from Scripture; but do not say *who* is to prove it. * * * *

"They say that Councils called by Princes may err: they do not determine whether Councils called in the name of Christ will err. * * * *

"VI. * * Since both Homilies and Articles appeal to the Fathers and Catholic Antiquity, let it be considered whether, in interpreting them by these, we are not going to the very authority to which they profess to submit themselves," &c.—4th Ed. *Feast of St. John Evang.*, 1841. J. H. N.

In accordance with the principles here laid down, the Tract itself is composed throughout. See, especially § 1. On Holy Scripture and the authority of the Church. § 2. On Justification by Faith. § 3. Works before and after Justification. § 4. The Visible Church. § 5. General Councils. § 6. Purgatory, &c. § 7. Sacraments. § 8. Transubstantiation. § 9. Masses.

On all these points, and throughout the Tract, doctrines are maintained totally opposite to the plain sense of the Articles, and

to the known design of their framers. And the whole object of the Tract, is evidently, to show that a person may with a safe conscience, hold the doctrines of one Church, and the endowments of another quite opposed to it.

The Author of the Tract, however, did at length, some years after, as is well known, openly join the Church of Rome; having, some years previously, acknowledged that the censures he had been publicly passing on that Church were, *at the time*, not at all in accordance with his real sentiments!

Yet the public Protest against the condemnation passed at Oxford on this and similar publications, has never been retracted!

And here a question suggests itself which all must allow to be quite pertinent to the matter in hand. Suppose an applicant for *Institution to a Benefice*, who should hold either such doctrines as the foregoing, or the extreme contrary ones, or any others whatever, to adopt *that system of interpretation* just alluded to, might he not thus *avoid all the difficulties and contests* which might otherwise be apprehended? He would only have to give to all inquiries such answers as might be most satisfactory to the Diocesan; and when in possession of his Living, might preach the direct contrary of what he had before said: alleging that he had been "*using words in a peculiar sense.*"

Those who would regard such a procedure, or anything even remotely approaching to it, as unpardonable in one whose doctrinal views they disapprove, but allowable in the cause of what they consider as orthodoxy,—these, if their sincerity is doubted when they profess to abhor disingenuousness, cannot surely complain of uncharitable treatment.

Then again, several writers on the opposite side pursue a similar plan. One of these describes himself as having "nailed *his colours* to the *mast* of the Evangelical Party." Of course, his real meaning is the *converse*. He doubtless means that it is—not *his* colours, but the colours of the Evangelical Party—that he has nailed,—not to *their* mast, but to his. The metaphor is a common one, and quite intelligible. In a sea-fight, a commander who nails the flag of his Country to the mast of his ship, is understood to have resolved that he will never surrender to any force that can be brought against him, but will suffer his vessel to be sunk, rather than yield. And in a controversy accordingly,—the weapons employed being not bullets, but arguments,—to announce a corresponding determination, is to proclaim a resolution not to yield to any arguments, but to maintain the opinion once formed, whatever reasons, strong or weak, may be adduced against it.

Accordingly, this Writer, having set forth certain views which he regards as unauthorized by Scripture, proceeds to remark, that, this being so, "We *necessarily conclude* A PRIORI, that they form

no part of the Creed of the Church of England." . . . . "Against this, however," he goes on to say, "it will be objected, that the Formularies of the Church do nevertheless contain some expressions, which seem to countenance those doctrines, and, therefore, that either the doctrine so favoured is scriptural, or that the Formulary which implies it is not scriptural. The question then is, —upon the assumption that the said doctrine is not scriptural, whether our Church be *inconsistent* with its own rule of Faith? To which the answer is here given in the *Negative*. And the reason is this; That Rule of Faith which excludes from our Creed all that is not scriptural, excludes also from our Formularies every *Acceptation* which is not scriptural. And consequently, every Minister of the Church of England is inevitably bound, both by his Subscription and by his ordination Vow, *to put such a construction upon the words of our Church Services as shall be in agreement with its Rule of Faith.*"

Now this is exactly of a piece with the procedure of the author of Tract 90, above cited. Our Reformers, he assumes, considered themselves (as they certainly did) to be in agreement with "catholic antiquity;" and then, having laid down what—in his opinion—Catholic Antiquity decides, he proceeds to wrest the language of our Reformers into a conformity with this; just as the other Writer forces their language into an agreement with *his* view of Scripture.

It is curious to observe that this is, almost word for word, the plea upon which the Arians of the last century endeavoured to justify themselves in subscribing the Formularies of our Church. Those Formularies, they admitted, contained some expressions which seemed to countenance (what they called) the vulgar notions about the Trinity; but then "the Protestant churches require men to comply with their Forms merely on account of their being agreeable to Scripture, and consequently in such sense only wherein they are agreeable to Scripture[1];" and as it seemed evident to them (the Arians) that the Athanasian doctrine was quite repugnant to Scripture, they "necessarily concluded *à priori*" that it was not, to them, the just meaning of our Formularies.

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[1] Clarke's Introduction to *The Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity.*

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